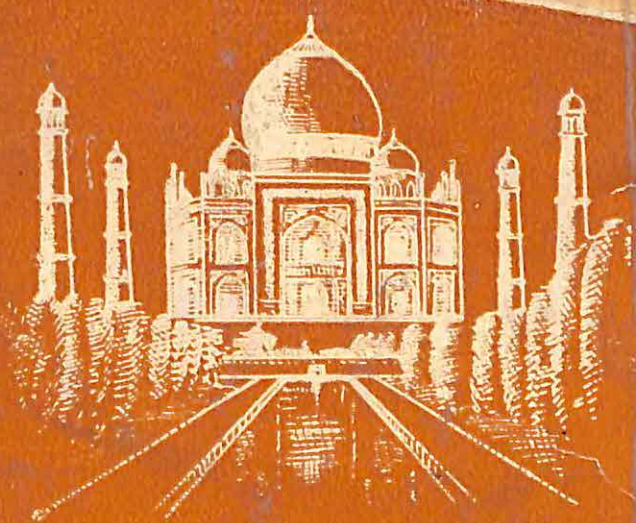
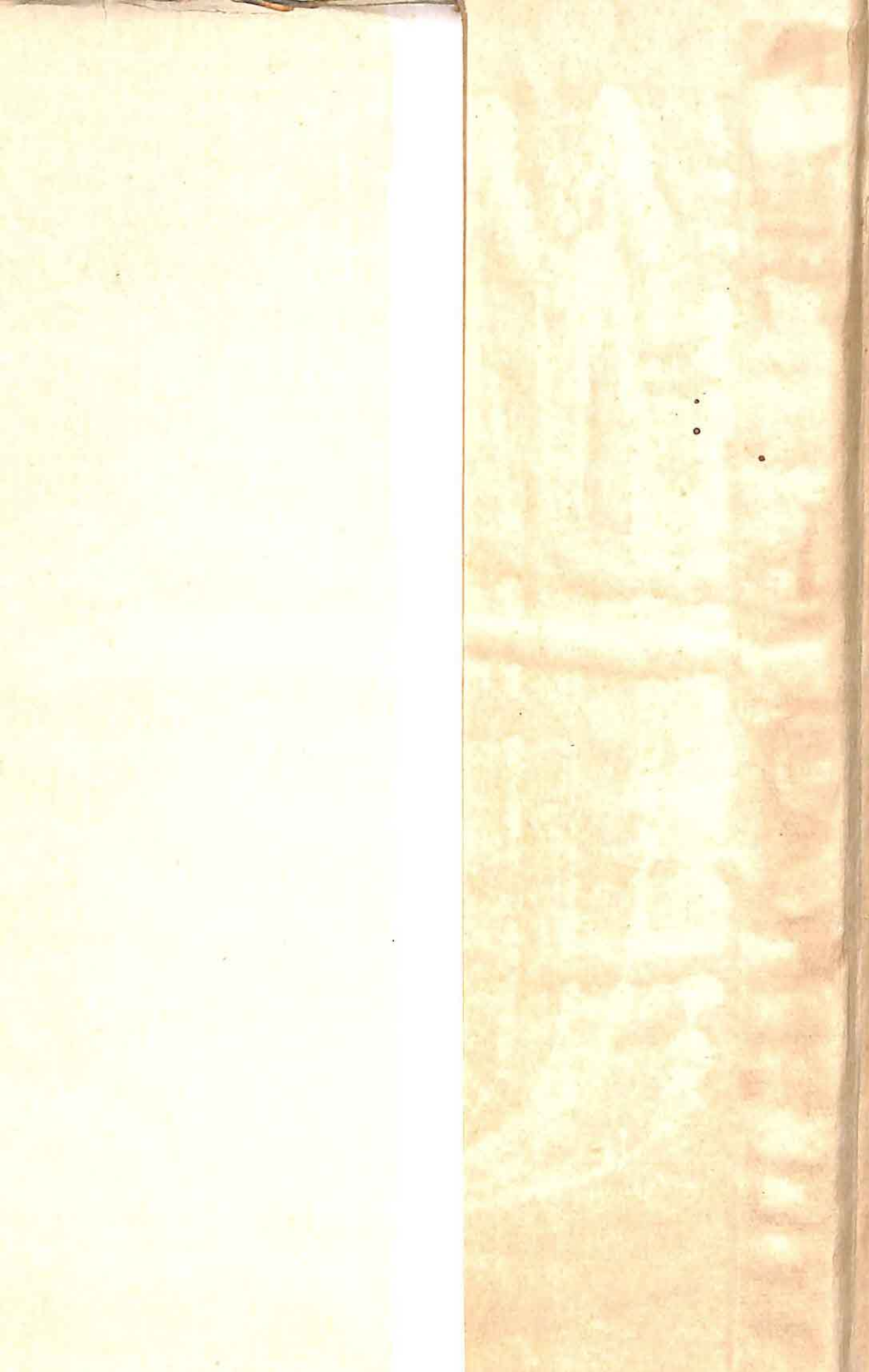


# Mughal Rule in India

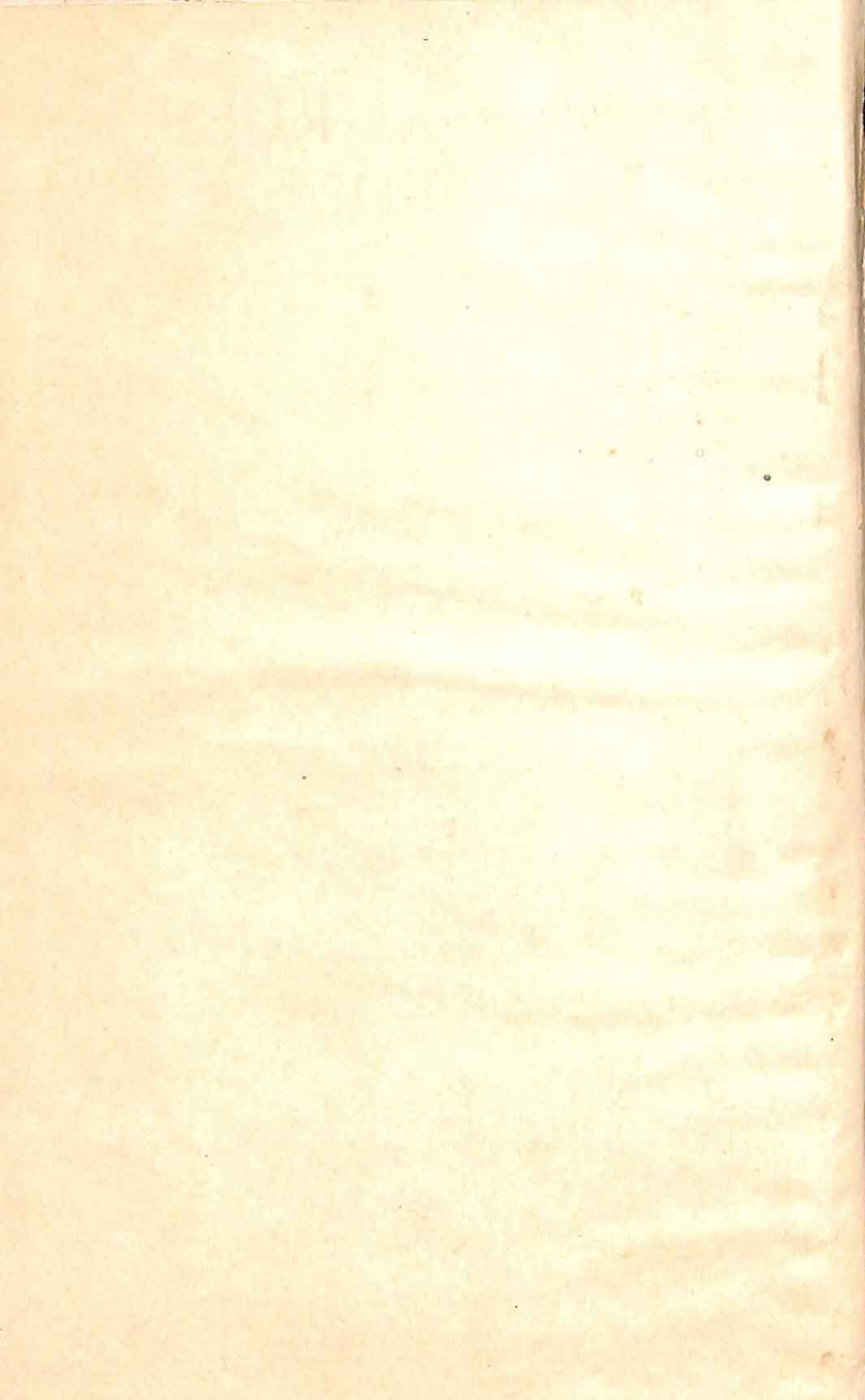


V. D. MAHAJAN



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# MUGHAL RULE IN INDIA

By

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Select Modern Governments, Principles of  
Political Science, Recent Political  
Thought, International Law, etc.*

**TENTH EDITION**

*(Revised & Enlarged)*



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## PREFACE TO THE TENTH EDITION

I have great pleasure in putting the new edition of this book in the hands of the readers. A comparison of this edition with the previous one will show that the book has been thoroughly revised. Many additions have been made throughout the book. The chapter on "Social and Economic Condition in Mughal India" has been overhauled completely. This has been done on account of the increasing emphasis on the study of the social and economic conditions in a country. The additions have not only added to the bulk of the book but also to its utility.

It seems to me that the study of Muslim Rule in India is of very great importance to the people of India as it is from there that we can learn the shortcomings in our national character. If India of today is to be a great country, we all must learn to forget our differences and cooperate with one another in the great task of national re-construction. There is no place for sluggishness or mutual bickerings. We also must learn to subordinate our selfish interests to those of the nation as a whole. If we fail to cultivate these virtues, our future will be doomed.

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## CHAPTER I

# India on the Eve of Babur's Invasion

On the eve of Babur's invasion, India was parcelled out among numerous mutually warring states. There was no paramount power in the country and a struggle for supremacy was going on. India was not in a position to present a united front to any enemy who might possess the audacity and ambition to carve out an Empire for himself. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, India was "a congeries of states at the opening of the 16th century and likely to be the easy prey of an invader who had the strength and will to attempt her conquest."

### Kingdom of Delhi

The Delhi Sultanate was not strong. The Lodi dynasty, founded by Bahlol, had a small territory. It included the Punjab, the Doab, Jaunpur, Oudh, a part of Bihar, Tirhut and the country between the Sutlej and Bundelkhand. Although King Bahlol in his life-time had conquered Jaunpur and Sikandar Lodi had tried to consolidate his power, the position of Ibrahim Lodi (1517-26) was not at all strong. Erskine has described the actual position of Ibrahim Lodi in these words: "These extensive possessions, though under one King, had no very strong principle of cohesion. The monarchy was a congeries of nearly independent principalities, jagirs, and provinces, each ruled by a hereditary chief, or by a Zamindar or delegate from Delhi; and the inhabitants looked more to their immediate governors who had absolute powers in the provinces and in whose hands consequently lay their happiness or misery, than to a distant or little known sovereign. It was the individual, not the law that reigned. The Lodi princes, not merely to strengthen their own power, but from necessity, had in general committed the Government of the provinces and the chief offices of trust to their own countrymen, the Afghans; so that men of the Lodi, Fermuli and Lohani tribes held all the principal jagirs which from the habitual modes of thinking of their race, they considered as their own right and purchased by their swords rather than as due to any bounty or liberality on the part of the sovereign."<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Erskine, W., *History of India under Eabur and Humayun.*

According to Lane-Poole, a throne depending on the allegiance of "an aristocracy of rapacious and turbulent chiefs demands politic concessions on the part of the monarch. Afghans above most men resent an undue assumption of superiority and tell with delicacy the tedious etiquette and obsequious ceremony of a formal court. The King must be their chief, a bona comrade and admitted leader in arms, but he must not give himself airs or show a want of respect for the free and outspoken clansmen upon whose swords dominion rests." King Bahlol was such a man. He had tried to build his power on the love of his nobles and he always tried to act according to their wishes. No wonder, he was able to carry them with himself. We are told that if on any occasion some nobles rebelled against him, he would go to them, hand over his sword to them and ask them to sever his head from his body. On the other hand, Ibrahim Lodi was a man of a different temperament. In order to strengthen his position, he tried to destroy the feudal-lords. Mian Bhaua fell a victim to his anger. Azam Humayan was assassinated in prison. Even the greatest barons trembled for their safety. Darya Khan, Khane-i-Jahan Lodi and Hussain Khan broke into open rebellion. Hussain Khan was assassinated in his bed, and his tragic death made the Afghan nobles bitterly hostile to Ibrahim Lodi. Darya Khan's son assumed the title of Mohammad Shah, struck coins in his own name and resisted the Delhi Sultan. The discontentment of the nobles reached the climax when Ibrahim Lodi cruelly treated the son of Daulat Khan Lodi, Governor of the Punjab. Daulat Khan Lodi was called to the court, but he sent his son Dilawar Khan in his own place. The King was annoyed and with a view to give expression to his own feelings, he took Dilawar to a room where the victims of Royal caprice were suspended from the walls. Addressing Dilawar, King Ibrahim declared: "Have you seen the condition of those who have disobeyed?" Dilawar understood the hint and kept quiet. Having come to Lahore, he communicated all that he had seen to his father. Alarmed for his safety, Daulat Khan sent an invitation to Babur, the ruler of Kabul, to invade India.

It is admitted on all hands that the behaviour of Ibrahim towards the nobles was insulting. He would order the Afghan chiefs to keep standing in his court with folded hands. They were made to observe the rules of etiquette which were certainly irksome. It was the discontentment and hatred among the nobles for the Sultan that made his position weak. When revolts took place, the Sultan tried to stem the rising conflagration by the blood of some of the leading Amirs. The result was still wider disaffection. This explains as to why the numerical superiority of Ibrahim's forces in the Battle of Panipat (1526) did not help him to win victory against Babur.

### **Mewar**

Another important state in India at that time was that of Mewar under Sangram Singh, better known as Rana Sanga. Its capital was Chittor. The reigning dynasty traced its origin from Guhil. It produced a series of remarkable rulers among whom Rana Kumbha (1433-68) occupied a very prominent position. Rana Sanga was a

great warrior and through his valour he had consolidated his position. He had undertaken several successful campaigns against the ruler of Malwa. He had conquered Bhilsa, Sarangpur, Chanderi and Ranthambore and given them to his own vassals. The princes of Ambar acknowledged him as their over-lord. The Raos of Gwalior, Ajmer, Sikri, Raisin, Kalpi, Boondi, Rampur and Abu paid homage to him as his feudatories. According to Tod, 18,000 horses, 7 Rajas of the highest rank, 9 Raos and 104 chieftains bearing the titles of Rawal and Rawat with 500 war-elephants followed him to the battlefield. Rana Sanga had made his power felt in Central India. Even Babur admitted in his Memoirs that Rana Sanga attained his position of eminence by his valour and sword. He had lost one eye, one arm and was crippled in one of his legs and consequently Tod called him "the fragment of a soldier".

Rana Sanga was the head of the Rajputs. "The Rajputs, energetic, chivalrous, fond of battle and bloodshed, animated by a strong national spirit, were ready to meet face to face the boldest veterans of the camp, and were at all times prepared to lay down their lives for their own honour." Rana Sanga was not only powerful but also ambitious. He aspired to capture the throne of Delhi and Agra which were next to his own territory. It was with a view to realise his ambition that he invited Babur to attack India. He was under the delusion that Babur, a descendant of Timur, would come to India, conquer it and after plundering it go back to Kabul leaving for him an open field for the realisation of his ambition. The strength of Rana Sanga can be judged from the fact that the soldiers of Babur had to fight a more desperate battle at Kanwah in 1527 than at Panipat in 1526.

### **Vijayanagar**

The Hindu Empire of Vijayanagar which had been founded in the time of Mohammad Tughluq in the 14th century, was a bulwark against the spread of Islam in the South. The contemporary King on the throne of Vijayanagar was Krishnadeva Raya. He was the greatest ruler of the Vijayanagar Empire. He was a great soldier and general. He was a patron of literature and art. Vijayanagar was at its height politically, economically and culturally. Foreign travellers and diplomats were dazzled by its wealth, prosperity and power.

Peas, the Portuguese Chronicler who visited India about 1522, writes thus about Krishnadeva Raya : "He is the most learned and perfect king that could possibly be, cheerful of disposition and very merry ; he is one that seeks to honour foreigners and receives them kindly asking about all their affairs whatever their condition may be. He is a great ruler and a man of much justice, but subject to sudden fits of rage..... He is by rank a greater lord than any by reason of what he possesses in arms and territories, but it seems that he has in fact nothing compared to what a man like him ought to have, so gallant and perfect is he in all things." Again, "He respects all sects of the Hindu religion alike, though his personal leanings were in favour of Vaishnavism. Krishnadeva Raya's kindness to the fallen

enemy, his acts of mercy and charity towards the residents of captured cities, his great military prowess which endeared him alike to his feudatory chiefs and to his subjects, the royal reception and kindness that he invariably bestowed upon foreign embassies, his imposing personal appearance, his genial look and polite conversation which distinguished a pure and dignified life, his love of literature and religion, and his solicitude for the welfare of his people; and above all, the almost fabulous wealth that he conferred as endowments on temples and Brahmins mark him out indeed as the greatest of the South Indian monarchs, who sheds a lustre on pages of history."

The rulers of Vijayanagar were always fighting against the Bahmani Kingdom. Hardly a reign passed when there was no large-scale fighting. The Bahmani Kingdom began to disintegrate after the execution of Mahmud Gawan, the Prime Minister, in 1481. It broke up into five independent Kingdoms of Ahmednagar (1489-1633), Bijapur (1489-1686), Golkunda (1512-1687), Berar (1484-1527) and Bidar (1490-1574).

### **Khandesh**

The kingdom of Khandesh was situated in the valley of the river Tapti. It was independent from the end of the 14th century. Its founder was Malik Raja Faruqi. As the rulers of Gujarat were determined to establish their hold over Khandesh, the two kingdoms were almost perpetually at war with each other. After 1508, there was chaos in Khandesh on account of the struggle for succession to the throne. The rival claimants were backed by Gujarat and Ahmednagar. Ultimately, Adil Khan III ascended the throne of Khandesh. After his death in 1520, he was succeeded by Mohammad I. However, on account of the long distance between Delhi and Khandesh, the politics of Khandesh did not influence those of Delhi.

### **Kashmir**

The independent kingdom of Kashmir was established by Shah Mirza in 1339. The most important ruler of Kashmir was Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70) who followed a policy of religious toleration and patronage of Sanskrit. He has been called the "Akbar of Kashmir". After his death in 1470, there was anarchy in the country. In 1540, Mirza Haider, a relative of Humayun, conquered Kashmir.

### **Orissa**

Orissa was a Hindu state and was not subjugated by any Muslim ruler. It exercised an effective barrier to the expansion of Islam towards the South. However, it did not exercise any great influence on the politics of Northern India.

### **Gujarat**

Gujarat got its independence under Zafar Khan in 1401. One of the most famous rulers of Gujarat was Mahmud Begarha (1458-1511). He captured Champanir, Junagadh and Cutch. King Mahmud was jealous of the power of the Portuguese and he tried

to crush them by joining the Sultan of Turkey. To begin with, he was successful against the Portuguese and defeated them in 1508. However, later on the Portuguese recovered and he was defeated. King Mahmud was mild and just to his own servants. Whether for abounding justice of generosity, for excesses in religious wars and for the diffusion of the laws of Islam and of Musalmans for soundness of judgment, for power, for valour and victory, Mahmud was a pattern of excellence. He was a bigoted person. He was succeeded by Muzaffar Shah II who had to fight against enemies all his life and was defeated by Rana Sanga of Mewar. His son, Bahadur Shah, ascended the throne in 1526.

### Malwa

The kingdom of Malwa became independent in the time of Firuz Tughluq. In 1435, the Ghori dynasty of Malwa was supplanted by Turki the Khalji dynasty under Mahmud Khan. According to Ferishta, "Sultan Mahmud was polite, brave, just and learned and during his reign, his subjects, Mohammadans as well as Hindus, were happy and maintained a friendly intercourse with each other. Scarcely a year passed that he did not take the field, so that his tent became his home and his resting place the field of battle. His leisure hours were devoted to hearing the histories and memoirs of different kings of the earth read." The next two kings were Ghiyas-ud-Din and Nasir-ud-Din and the latter died in 1512. In the time of Mahmood II, all power was captured by the Rajput chief known as Medini Rao. The Hindus were appointed to important positions of trust and responsibility. This led to bickerings amongst the Muslims. Medini Rao defeated the forces of Malwa and the Sultan fell into the hands of the Rajputs. Rana Sanga restored him to his kingdom. In 1531, Malwa was conquered by Bahadur Shah of Gujarat.

### Bengal

Bengal was independent from the time of Firuz Tughluq. The ruling dynasty was called the Hussaini dynasty. Ala-ud-Din Hussain (1493-1519) was the first ruler of the Hussaini dynasty. He extended his empire upto Assam. The ruler came into conflict with Sikandar Lodi. He was obliged to make peace and agree to respect the eastern frontier of Bihar. Nusrat Shah was his son. He was a contemporary of Babur and made peace with him. He was a patron of Bengali literature. The Mahabharata was translated into Bengali under his orders. On the whole, the people of the province were prosperous and contented with their lot.

### Sind

The province of Sind had become independent towards the end of the reign of Mohammad Tughluq. At the beginning of the 16th century, there was a lot of confusion and lawlessness in the country. The Sumra dynasty was decaying and Shah Beg, Governor of Kandhar, had an eye on Sind. In 1520, Shah Beg defeated the Subras and occupied the province. His son, Shah Hussain, annexed Multan. The power of the Afghans was at its height on the eve of Babur's invasion of India.

Babur himself gave an account of India on the eve of his invasion. He referred to five Muslim kings and two Hindu kings. According to him, the greater part of Hindustan was under the Sultan of Delhi, although there were other independent and powerful states. To quote Babur himself, "The five kings who have been mentioned are great princes and are all Mussalmans, and possessed of formidable armies and rulers of vast territories. The most powerful of the pagan princes, in point of territory and army, is the Raja of Bijanagar. Another is the Rana Sanga who has attained his present high eminence, only in these later times, by his own valour and his sword. His original principality was Chittor."

According to Edwardes and Garret, although India was politically divided, yet culturally she was becoming one. The spread of the Bhakti movement was bringing the Muslims and the Hindus nearer one another. There was a better understanding between the two. The great apostles of the Bhakti movement were Ramananda, Vallabhacharya, Chaitanya, Namdeva, Kabir and Nanak. Their teachings set aside the caste-distinctions and thereby brought both the Hindus and the Muslims together.

The Sufis in Islam supplemented the work of the reformers of the Bhakti movement. The result of all this was that the Hindus began to respect the Muslim saints and the Muslims began to respect the Hindu Yogis. The Bhakti movement gave an impetus to the growth of such vernaculars as Hindi, Bengali, Marathi and Maithili. Sanskrit flourished in the courts of the Hindu kings. Rup Goswami, a Minister of Hussain Shah of Bengal, composed several works in Sanskrit and **Vidagdha**, **Madhava** and **Lalita Madhava** are most important among them. In the field of architecture, a new contribution was made by the combined efforts of the Hindus and Muslims.

Agriculture was in a flourishing condition. However, on account of the frequent invasions, villages were built and destroyed very often. Ordinarily there was always a surplus of corn produced in the country. There was a lot of trade with Malaya, China, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran, Tibet and Bhutan. The upper and middle classes in India were fond of luxury. However, the common people were poor. On the whole, the country was prosperous.

India was full of good soldiers, but there was not much of discipline and training. The Indians refused to accept the latest inventions in the field of military science. It was difficult for them to fight against the latest weapons of the West. There was also clannishness among the people. No wonder, the Indian Army was no match for Babur.

While the Muslims were busy in the army and administration, the Hindus carried on the work of agriculture. They were divided into sects and castes. The Brahmanas were held in high esteem. They not only preserved Hindu thought but even developed it by means of commentaries. They did not make large impact on account of the lack of royal patronage. Some of the Hindus started popular religious movements in various parts of the country.

There was a lot of glamour in the courts of the Muslim and Hindu rulers. Magnificent buildings were constructed in the headquarters of the various Muslim states. Hindu craftsmen and Muslim architects worked together and produced a new style of architecture. On account of patronage by the Sultans and other rulers in various parts of the country, there was a lot of intellectual activity among Muslim poets and theologians. The cultural life in Delhi and other capitals of the states in India was exotic and foreign. It was isolated from the country as a whole. The main source of this culture was Persia. It is true that the Persian influence at this time was restricted only to the courts and the ruling classes, but this increased tremendously during the Mughal period.

It appears that by this time the zeal of the Muslims to convert the Hindus to Islam had become less and a new tendency was to live and let live. Moreover, the old enthusiasm for conquests and empire-building among the Turks was replaced by a general spirit of adventure. There were leaders who wanted followers and there were young followers who wanted leaders who could give them promotions, wealth and glory. There was no dearth of people who were unattached to any party and who were ready to rally under the banner of any outstanding leader. This tendency was to be found only among the Muslims and not among the Hindus. The latter were more worried about the preservation of what was left with them or were anxious to get back what they had lost previously. There was intellectual and social activity among the Hindus. They were trying to adjust themselves to the presence of Islam in their midst. Hindu society was on the defensive and was not busy in doing anything constructive.

### **The Beginning of a New Age**

The beginning of the Mughal rule in India in 1526 is considered by some scholars as the beginning of the modern and the ending of the medieval period of Indian History. There are others who are of the view that the modern period of Indian History begins with the War of Indian Independence in 1857. However, the medieval period is generally extended up to 1707, 1748 or 1761. This shows that most of the scholars do not regard the year 1526 as a dividing line between medieval and modern period. In spite of this, it cannot be denied that a new age began in Indian History with the establishment of Mughal rule in India.

It is pointed out that before the Mughals, the Muslim rulers of Delhi called themselves the Sultans and they recognised the authority of the Caliph. The Mughal rulers beginning with Babar repudiated the authority of Caliph and called themselves Padshah. They took up titles which were formerly used by the Caliph alone. The Mughal rulers started the system of **Jharokha Darshan**.

Before the Mughals, the Sultans of Delhi followed a very narrow sectarian policy. The Hindus were looked down upon and they were not given a fair deal. A large number of social, religious and political disabilities were imposed on them. The Mughals started

a new policy in this direction. A beginning was made by Babur who did not treat the Afghans and Rajputs harshly even after their defeat. Babur married two of his sons to the daughters of Medini Rao. There was a virtual revolution in this field in the time of Akbar. By his kind treatment of the Hindus in general and Rajputs in particular, he was able to win them over and it is they who fought for his glory and greatness even against their co-religionists. The policy of religious persecution followed by Aurangzeb was an exception.

There was also an unprecedented growth in the field of fine arts. During the Sultanate period, no encouragement was given to painting, but Babur and his descendants made painting a living art by means of royal patronage. There was a virtual revolution in this field. It is true that architecture was not completely ignored by the Sultans of Delhi, but the contribution of the Mughals was unique in this field. Moreover, Mughal architecture represents a happy synthesis of Indo-Muslim art traditions and that was not the case with the Sultans. Music also received a lot of encouragement during the Mughal period. Such a thing did not exist in the Sultanate period.

During the Mughal period, there was a greater spirit of toleration between the Hindus and the Muslims. That was partly due to the fact that the Hindus and Muslims came into closer contacts with each other in different walks of life. That created feelings of sympathy and respect for each other. Great musicians, painters, sculptors, calligraphists etc., were drawn from both the Hindus and Muslims. Both the Hindus and Muslims participated in the fairs and festivals of each other.

There was also the growth of local languages during the Mughal period. Independent local dynasties started patronising religious languages and those languages were given the status of official languages. These languages were also used by the religious reformers for the spread of their ideas. They wrote their books in those languages. The result was that the local dialects became religious languages during this period.

It was also during this period that European trading companies established themselves on the Indian soil. The Portuguese set up their posts in India. They were followed by the Dutch, the Danes, the English and the French. They were not able to make much headway up to the time of Aurangzeb. However, the field became clear for them after the death of Aurangzeb. For all these factors it is said that with the coming of the Mughals, a new age started in the History of India.

## CHAPTER II

# Babur (1526-30)

Zahir-ud-Din Mohammad, surnamed Babur, was born in 1483. He was connected with both the families of Timur and Chingiz Khan. Thus, he had in him the blood of the two greatest conquerors of Central Asia. At the early age of 12, his father, Sultan Umar Shaikh Mirza, died and Babur became the king of Farghana. At the time of his accession, he was surrounded on all sides by his enemies. His uncles and cousins took advantage of his youth and inexperience and attacked him right and left. Ahmed Mirza attacked Babur in 1490. Fortunately for Babur, his attack failed and he himself died in 1495. It was now the turn of Babur to have his revenge and he took full advantage of the confusion that prevailed in Samarkand after the death of Ahmed Mirza, his uncle. In November 1497, Babur was able to capture Samarkand. Unfortunately, while at Samarkand, he fell ill and his Ministers gave out that he was dead. They also put on the throne the younger brother of Babur named Jahangir.

As soon as Babur recovered from his sickness and came to know of the trick played upon him, he marched from Samarkand to recover Farghana. Due to his ill-luck, Babur lost both Samarkand and Farghana. He could not capture Farghana because Jahangir was securely established there and as regards Samarkand, it was occupied in his absence by his cousin, Ali. The result was that in February 1498, Babur was not the king of any place. His only possession was Khojend. He had to live a wanderer's life for more than a year. However, in June 1499, he was able to recapture the capital of Farghana.

In 1500, Babur conquered Samarkand for the second time but he was forced by the Uzbeks to leave the same. After the loss of Samarkand, he lost Farghana also in the same year. The result was that after all these ups and downs of life, Babur was left with nothing in 1502 and no wonder he left his native land to try his luck somewhere else.

Babur set out for Kabul. At that time, there was political chaos in that country. The reason was that Babur's uncle, Ulugh Beg, had died in 1501 and his son Abdul Razzak was deposed by a usurper named Mukin Beg. There was a strong feeling in Kabul that the usurper should be turned out and a prince of the royal blood be put on the throne. Babur managed the whole situation to his

own advantage and the ultimate result was that he occupied Kabul in 1504. As the king of Kabul, he ruled from 1504 to 1526 when he led his major offensive against India. In that interval, Babur conquered Kandhar and Herat. In 1513, he again tried his luck to conquer Samarkand after the death of Shaibani. He entered into an alliance with the Shah of Persia, and captured both Bokhara and Samarkand. However, he was not destined to sit on the throne of Samarkand for long. Within less than a year, he was driven out of Samarkand.

It was only after his final failure in Samarkand that Babur paid his full attention to the conquest of India. He himself wrote thus in 1526: "From the time I conquered the land of Kabul till now, I had always been bent on subduing Hindustan. Sometimes, however, from the misconduct of my Amirs, sometimes from the opposition of my brothers etc., I was prevented. At length, the obstacles were removed and I gathered an army (1519) and marched on to Bajour and Swat and thence to advance to Bhera on the west of the Jhelum River."

Babur reached as far as the Chenab in 1519. Acting on the advice of his ministers, he sent an ambassador to Ibrahim Lodi demanding the restoration of the country which belonged to the Turks. The ambassador was detained at Lahore and came back empty-handed after many months. After conquering Bhera, Khushab and the country of the Chenab, Babur went back to Kabul.

In 1520, Badakshan was captured and was put under the charge of Humayun. In 1522, Kandhar was captured and given to Kamran.

At this time, Babur received many invitations and those came particularly from Daulat Khan Lodi, Governor of the Punjab, Ala-ud-Din, uncle of Ibrahim, and Rana Sanga. There could be no better chance for him to fulfil his ambition of conquering India. Babur at once started and reached Lahore. On his arrival at Lahore, he found that Daulat Khan Lodi had already been turned out by an Afghan chief. Babur defeated the Afghan chief, captured Lahore and left for Kabul after appointing Ala-ud-Din as the Governor of Lahore. All this happened in 1524. However, Ala-ud-Din was not allowed to stay long at Lahore and he was driven out by Daulat Khan Lodi. Ala-ud-Din ran away to Kabul.

### **Battle of Panipat, 1526**

After making elaborate preparations, Babur set out for the conquest of India. First of all, he had to deal with Daulat Khan who had turned out Ala-ud-Din from Lahore. After defeating him, Babur advanced to Delhi via Sirhind. Ibrahim Lodi came out of Delhi to give battle to Babur. The opposing armies met on the historic plains of Panipat. Babur had certain advantages. His artillery worked wonders. In spite of the superior numerical strength of Ibrahim Lodi's armies, he was defeated and killed in the battlefield. About this battle, Babur writes: "When the incitement to

battle had come, the Sun was spear-high ; till mid-day fighting had been in full force ; noon passed, the foe was crushed in defeat, our friends rejoicing and gay. By God's mercy and kindness, this difficult affair was made easy for us. In one-half day, that armed mass was laid upon the earth. Five or six thousand men were killed in one place close to Ibrahim. Our estimate of the other dead, lying all over the field, was 15 to 16,000, but it came to be known, later in Agra from the statements of Hindustanis, that 40 or 50,000 may have died in that battle."

According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "The battle of Panipat placed the empire of Delhi in Babur's hands. The power of the Lodi dynasty was shattered to pieces and the sovereignty of Hindustan passed to the Chaghtai Turks.

"Just as Clive's victory at Plassey has a great significance in the establishment of the British rule in India, similarly Babur's victory in the first battle of Panipat has a great significance in the establishment of Mughal kingdom in India. These battles were followed by some greater brilliant victories like those of Kanwah in the case of Babur and Buxar in the case of Clive. Just as the Mughal Empire was established after Kanwah, similarly British rule was established after the battle of Buxar."

Dr. R. P. Tripathi observes : "The battle of Panipat brought Babar to the end of the second stage of his Indian conquest. It sealed the fate of the Lodi dynasty as effectively as his ancestor Timur had done of the Tughluqs, and told seriously on the morale and already weak organization of the Afghans. The soldiers and the peasantry alike ran away in fear of the conqueror ; gates were shut of every fortified town, and people busied themselves in organizing defences everywhere. The supposed solidarity of the Afghans was broken, and the leaders of its various tribes were rent asunder and demoralised.... Finally, the victory of Panipat laid the foundation of the great Mughal empire which in grandeur, power and culture was the greatest in the Muslim world and could even claim equality with the Roman empire." (**Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire**, p. 35).

After the Battle of Panipat, Babur sent his forces at once to occupy Delhi and Agra. On 27th April, 1526, the Khutba was read in the principal mosque of Delhi in the name of Zahir-ud-Din Mohammad Babur, the first of the Great Mughals. Sir Wolseley Haig points out that it is an irony that Babur and his descendants are known as Mughals. Actually they were Barlas Turks. In his early days, Timur had to fight bitterly against the Mughals before he could overcome them. They eventually succeeded in expelling Babur from the home of his fathers. However, the term 'Mughal' had become a generic term for warlike adventurers from Persa or Central Asia. Although Timur and his descendants hated the name 'Mughal', it was their fate to be known as the Mughals. It seem too late to correct the error now. The Arabic form of the name is **Mughul** or **Mughool** but in India, it has assumed the form **Mughal**. The Portuguese used the form 'Mogor'.

Babur had to meet with certain difficulties. The Rajputs were not friendly to him. There were many Afghan chiefs who considered their claims to be superior to that of Babur. Moreover, his own followers began to desert him on account of the hot climate of the country. It was the iron will of Babur that saved the situation. He made it clear to his followers that he was determined to stay on in India and those who wanted to go back to Kabul might do so happily.

To quote Babar, "By the labours of several years, by encountering hardship, by long travel, by flinging myself and the army into battle, and by deadly slaughter, we, through God's grace, beat these masses of enemies in order that we may take their broad lands. And now, what force compels us, what necessity has arisen that we should, without cause, abandon countries taken at such a risk of life? Was it for us to remain in Kabul, the sport of harsh poverty? Henceforth, let no well-wisher of mine speak of such things. But let not those turn back from going, who, weak in strong persistence, have set their face to depart." His speech had the desired result and most of his followers decided to stay on in India. However, Khwaja Kalan and his followers decided to go back. He had become so home-sick that he wrote the following couplet on the walls of his residence in Delhi :

If safe and sound I cross the Sind,  
Blacken my face ere I wish for Hind !

### **Battle of Kanwah, 1527**

The victory at Panipat did not make Babur the ruler of India. He met a stronger foe in Rana Sanga of Mewar. The latter had the ambition to occupy the throne of Delhi itself. Such a formidable foe had to be disposed of if Babur was to have an unchallengeable position.

In 1527, Rana Sanga advanced with a large army to Biyana. Babur also advanced to Fatehpur Sikri. The advance-guard of Babur was defeated by the Rajputs and the result was that his followers got disheartened. At this time, Babur showed his qualities of leadership. He ordered the breaking of the cups of wine. He repented of his past sins and promised to give up wine for the rest of his life. He addressed his soldiers in these words : "Noble men and soldiers ! Every man that comes into the world is subject to dissolution. When we are passed away and gone, God only survives, unchangeable. Whoever comes to life must, before it is over, drink from the cup of death. He who arrives at the inn of mortality must one day inevitably take his departure from that house of sorrow—the world. How much better is it to die with honour than to live with infamy.

With fame, even if I die, I am contented ;  
Let fame be mine, since my body is death's.

"The most High God has been propitious to us, and has now placed us in such a crisis that if we fall in the field, we die the death of martyrs ; if we survive, we rise victorious, avengers of the cause

of God. Let us, then, with one accord swear on God's holy word ; that none of us will even think of turning his face from his warfare nor desert from the battle and slaughter that ensues, till his soul is separated from his body."

The appeal of Babur had the desired effect and he started the attack with heavy artillery fire. Then, according to Ferishta, Babur himself "charged like a lion rushing from his lair". After an obstinate battle, the Rajputs were defeated and Babur became the Victor of Kanwah.

Regarding the importance of the Battle of Kanwah, Prof. Rushbrook Williams observes : "In the first place, the menace of Rajput supremacy which had loomed large before the eyes of Mohammadans in India for the last few years, was removed once for all. The powerful confederacy which depended so largely for its unity upon the strength and reputation of Mewar, was shattered by a single great defeat and ceased henceforth to be a dominant factor in the politics of Hindustan. Secondly, the Mughal Empire of India was soon firmly established. Babur had definitely seated himself upon the throne of Sultan Ibrahim, and the sign and seal of his achievement had been the annihilation of Sultan Ibrahim's most formidable antagonists. Hitherto the occupation of Hindustan might have been looked upon as a mere episode in Babur's career of adventure ; but from henceforth it became the keynote of his activities for the remainder of his life. His days of wandering in search of fortune are now passed away. The fortune is his, and he has to show himself worthy of it. And it is significant of the new stage in his career which this battle marks that never afterwards does he have to stake his throne and life upon the issue of a stricken field. Fighting there is, and fighting in plenty, to be done ; but it is fighting for the extension of his power, for the reduction of rebels, for the ordering of his kingdom. It is never fighting for his throne. And from it is also significant of Babur's grasp of vital issues that from henceforth the centre of gravity of his power is shifted from Kabul to Hindustan."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. R. P. Tripathi says : "The consequences of the battle were indeed far-reaching. It broke the Rajput confederacy which depended for its existence not on any enlightened conception of race, community, religion or civilization, but on the prestige of the Udaipur House, the military and diplomatic victories of its warlike leaders, who had now lost their moral prestige. With the break-up of the confederacy vanished the nightmare of Hindu supremacy which had kept the Muslim states in northern India in anxious suspense. The destruction of many of the most redoubtable Rajput chiefs and the disintegration which set in after Rana Sanga became helpless, once more laid open Rajputana to the ravages of the neighbouring powers, which were only too ready to step in. Khanua removed the most formidable obstacle in the way of the foundation of the Mughal

1. Williams, L. F. Rushbrook : *An Empire Builder of the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 156-57.

empire. Babur assumed the title of Ghazi and his throne in India was now quite secure. The centre of gravity of his power now definitely shifted from Kabul to Hindustan. Finally, the defeat of the Rajputs weakened the hands of the Afghans. With the help of the powerful and independent chiefs of Rajputana, they would have been certainly far more formidable rivals to the Mughals than when single-handed." (*Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, p. 43).

According to Dr. G. N. Sharma, "But whatever may have been the causes of the defeat, the consequences of the battle of Khanua were immense and immeasurable. The battle had not proved to be a light adventure for Babur who had almost staked his life and throne and suffered a grievous loss in men and money before he could claim success. Nevertheless, the victory had far-reaching results and shifted the sovereignty of the country from the Rajputs to the Mughals who were to enjoy it for over two hundred years. It would be however a mistake to suppose that the Rajput power was crushed for ever and that they wielded no influence in the politics of the country. No one realized it better than Babur himself who stopped short of further encroachment upon Rajasthan. After Khanua he did nothing more than storming Chanderi and obtaining possession of that fortress on 29th January, 1528."

Another writer says that the battle of Kanwaha was the imperial swan song of the Rajputs. This battle proved the weakness of the Rajput army. Jealousies among the different Rajput clans ruined them all. The Rajputs had no answer to the wheeling tactics of the Mughal cavalry. It is rightly pointed out that after the battle of Kanwaha, the Rajputs were never able to claim in future their hegemony in Northern India.

After losing the Battle of Kanwah, Rana Sanga took a vow never to enter the portals of Chittor without defeating Babur. When he heard of Babur's siege of Chanderi, he started for that place. However, he died in January, 1528, before he could render any help.

According to Dr. Sharma, in spite of heroism, Rana Sanga was not a statesman of high order. "In his relations with Babur he showed vacillation and want of decision and firmness. He broke the agreement with Babur. Even after he had decided not to help him, he failed to proceed and capture Agra which he ought to have done immediately after Babur had moved south of the Punjab to fight with Ibrahim Lodi. Had he done so he would have not only acquired the immense treasures and resources that lay stored in that town but also the support of the entire race of the Indian Afghans and other notables who were at that time thoroughly inimical to Babur. He occupied himself after Babur's victory at Panipat in the more congenial task of establishing his rule over the territory in Rajasthan that still belonged to the Afghans instead of making preparations for a contest with Babur. After he had conquered Bayana he did not engage Babur for about a month and foolishly allowed him time to complete his preparations. He proceeded from Bayana to Khanua by a long route that took him about

a month, though from Bayana Khanua could have been reached in a day's time. He failed to appreciate the strength and weakness of Babur's position and military establishment. The greatest mistake of his life, however, must be considered to be his failure to make an alliance with Ibrahim Lodi for driving away Babur who was then a foreigner and hence an enemy not only of Ibrahim but also of all Indians of that time. An impartial student of history must, therefore, conclude the chapter of Sanga's relation with Babur by adding that the former was completely outwitted by the latter in diplomacy and war"<sup>1</sup>.

### **Medini Rao of Chanderi (1528)**

After the Battle of Kanwah, the power of the Rajputs was crippled but not completely crushed. The remnants of the Rajput army were gathered together and the lead was taken by Medini Rao of Chanderi. Babur carried the fort of Chanderi by storm. The whole of the garrison of the fort was put to the sword. After this, there was no other Rajput chief to challenge the authority of Babur.

### **Battle of Ghagra, 1529**

Babur had still to deal with the Afghans. Mahmood Lodi, the brother of Ibrahim Lodi, had captured power in Bihar and many other chiefs had joined him. Babur sent his son Askari in advance and himself followed him. Many Afghan chiefs made their submission to Babur on the way. When Mahmood<sup>2</sup> was deserted by his supporters, he moved towards Bengal where he was given shelter. Babur went in hot pursuit of him and defeated him in the Battle of Ghagra in May, 1529. Babur's artillery rendered him great service in his action against the Afghans.

It was in this way that "in three battles Babur had reduced northern India to submission." The rest of his life was spent in organizing the administration of the provinces which formed his new kingdom. His system was purely feudal. He divided his territory into a large number of Jagirs and those were distributed among his officers. Those officers were responsible not only for the collection of land revenue on those Jagirs but were also in charge of the civil administration of those areas. Much of the territory remained in the hands of the native land-holders whether they were Hindus or Muslims. We are told that from the provinces "west to east from Bhera and Lahore to Bahraich and Bihar and north to south from Sialkot to Ranthambhor", Babur got an equivalent of £2,600,000 as land revenue.

### **Death of Babur, 1530**

The circumstances leading to the death of Babur in December, 1530, are curious. It is stated that his son, Humayun, fell sick and it was declared that there was no possibility of his survival.

1. Sharma, G. N. : *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors*, p. 45.

2. He was the son of Sikander Lodi.

It was at this time that Babur is said to have walked three times round the bed of Humayun and prayed to God to transfer the illness of his son to him. He uttered the following words : "I have borne it away ! I have borne it away !" It is stated that from that time onward Humayun began to recover and the condition of Babur went from bad to worse and ultimately he breathed his last<sup>1</sup>. Before dying he addressed the following words to Humayun : "I commit to God's keeping you and your brothers and all my kinsfolk and your people and my people, and all of these I confide to you."

At the time of his death, Babur was hardly 48 years of age. However, he was "the King for thirty-six years, crowded with hardship, tumult and strenuous energy." In accordance with his will, his dead body was taken to Kabul and "there lies at peace in his grave in the garden on the hill, surrounded by those he loved, by the sweet-smelling flowers of his choice and the cool running stream ; and the people still flock to the tomb and offer prayers at the simple mosque which an august descendant built in memory of the founder of the Indian Empire."

### Administrative Changes

In spite of the fact that Babur spent most of his time in fighting, he was able to make certain changes in the administration. He replaced the weak confederal monarchy of the Afghans by a divine right despotism. The position of the king was raised so high that even his highest nobles had to behave as if they were merely his servants. The Prime Minister of Babur served as a link between him and the departmental heads and this post was held by Mir Nizam-ud-Din Khalifa. Babur introduced Persian ways and manners in the court. He built a large number of palaces, underground Brooms, baolis and baths. He gave a sense of urbanity and stability to the Government. He gave high appointments to Afghans and Hindus. Dilawar Khan Lodi was given the title of Khan-i-Khana. He tried to play the Afghans against one another.

Babur set up Dak Chaukis at intervals of 15 miles. At each Dak Chauki, he maintained good horses. It was with their help that Babur was able to get news from distant places. The local officers in the provinces and districts enjoyed a lot of autonomy and it would have been difficult to exercise any effective and comprehensive control over them. Babur was not able to take any steps for the promotion of agriculture. His fiscal policy was also defective. He squandered away the treasures of Delhi and Agra and hence had to face a lot of financial difficulty.

Babur was not prepared to accept the authority of the Caliph

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1. It appears from the account of Gulbadan that Babur fell ill that very day and died soon after. But according to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, Babur was sickly for two or three months after the recovery of Humayun. The latter was summoned to the capital from his jagir when the condition of Babur became serious. According to S. R. Sharma, the death of Babur was due to the poison given to him by the mother of Ibrahim Lodi. Gulbadan also refers to this fact.

over himself. He asserted the supremacy of the ruler. He also followed a policy of religious toleration. He married the daughters of Medini Rao to Humayun and Kamran. He accepted the son of Rana Sanga as a vassal. He got from him Ranthambore but gave him Shamsabad in exchange.

Abbas Khan Sarawani put the following words into the mouth of Sher Khan about the administration of Babur: "Since I have been amongst the Mughals, and know their conduct in action, I see that they have no order or discipline, that their kings from pride of birth and station, do not personally superintend the government, but leave all the affairs and business of the State to their nobles and ministers in whose sayings and doings they put perfect confidence. These grandees act on corrupt motives in every case, whether it be that of a soldier's or a cultivator's or a rebellious zamindar's. Whoever has money, whether loyal or disloyal, can get his business settled as he likes by paying for it, but if a man has no money, although he may have displayed his loyalty on a hundred occasions, or be he a veteran soldier, he will never gain his end. From this lust of gold, they make no distinction between friend and foe."

### Babur's Memoirs

Babur's autobiography called **Tuzuk-i-Baburi** is popularly known as *Memoirs of Babur*. Babur wrote this book at different times whenever he had any leisure. It was written in Turki. It was twice translated into Persian by Payanda Khan and Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana. It has also been translated into many European languages, particularly English and French. It was translated into English by Leyden and Erskine in 1826. A.S. Beveridge has published a revised English version. The book was translated into French in 1871. It is to be noted that Mrs. Beveridge translated the work from the original Turki and the others had translated from the Persian translation. Consequently, her translation is more authentic and reliable.

Babur was a master of flawless style in Turki. He has given his impressions in a very frank manner. He did not hesitate even while recording his own shortcomings. It appears that the whole story is like a romance. Babur's Memoirs are a first rate authority on the history of his age. The only unfortunate thing about them is that they are not complete. There are gaps at certain places.

According to Elliot and Dowson, Babur's Memoirs form one of the best and faithful pieces of autobiography extant. They are infinitely superior to the hypocritical revelations of Timur and the pompous declamation of Jahangir. They are not inferior in any respect to the Expedition of Xenophon and rank but little below Commentaries of Caesar. They are equal in simplicity and exhibit much less dissimulation than the celebrated work. The Memoirs abound in statistical details which evidently display Babur as a man of genius and observation. The modern travellers have agreed that Babur's description of Kabul and its environments as well as that of Farghana and the countries to the north of Hindukush are not to be exceeded for their fidelity and comprehensiveness. His description of Hindustan occupies in the translation twenty-five closely printed

quarto pages. It contains not only an exact account of its boundaries, population, resources, revenues and divisions but a full enumeration of its useful fruits, trees, birds, beasts and fishes with such a minute description of their several habitudes and peculiarities as would make no contemptible figure in a modern work of natural history. The Memoirs contain the characters of his countrymen and contemporaries--their appearance, manners, dress, pursuits, tastes, habits and actions. Babur has described them with such minuteness and reality that they seem to form part of our acquaintance and to live amongst us as one of ourselves. We also get from the Memoirs an idea of the character of Babur. We find him after all trials of a long life, retaining the same kind and affectionate heart and the same easy and sociable temper with which he set out on his career and in whom the possession of power and grandeur had neither blunted the delicacy of his taste nor diminished his sensibility to the enjoyment of nature and imagination. Babur seems to have been a man of frank and generous character. There are throughout the Memoirs various traits of singular clemency and tenderness of heart for a monarch and professional warrior. He weeps ten whole days for the loss of a friend who fell over a precipice after one of his drinking parties. He spares the lives and even restores the domains of various chieftains who had betrayed his confidence and afterwards fallen into his power. However, there are cases of ferocity and a hard-hearted wastefulness of life. In his wars in Afghanistan and India the prisoners were commonly butchered in cold blood after the action and pretty uniformly a triumphal pyramid was erected of their skulls. These executions were carried out with great solemnity before the Royal pavilion. It is stated that on one occasion such was the number of prisoners brought forward for killing that the tent of Babur had three times to be removed to a different place, the ground before its being drenched with blood and encumbered with carcasses. On one occasion, an attempt was made to poison him and when the plot was detected, the taster was cut to pieces, the cook was flayed alive and the scullions trampled to death by elephants.

Elliot and Dowson point out that it is difficult to believe that the Memoirs are the work of an Asiatic and a sovereign. They are copiously and rather diffusely written. They are perfectly free from the ornamental verbosity, the eternal and puerile exaggerations of most oriental compositions. Though savouring so far of royalty as to abound in descriptions of dresses and ceremonies they are yet occupied in the main with concerns greatly too rational and humble to be in favour with monarchs.

According to Sir E. Denison Ross, "The Memoirs of Babar must be reckoned among the most enthralling and romantic works in the literature of all time."<sup>1</sup>

According to Rushbrook Williams, "Babur's place in history rests upon his Indian conquests, but his place in biography and literature is determined by his delightful Memoirs."

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1. *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 20.

His contemporary and kinsman Mirza Haidar Dughlat says : "In the composition of Turki poetry he was second only to Amir Ali Shir. He has written a *divan* in the most lucid Turki. He invented a style of verse called *mubaiyan* and was the author of a most useful treatise on jurisprudence which has been generally adopted. He also wrote an essay on Turki prosody, more elegant than any other..... Then there is his Waqai, or Turki Memoirs written in simple, unaffected, yet pure style."

The following is the description given by Babur of India and its fauna and flora : "Hindustan is a country of few charms. The people have no good looks ; of social intercourse, paying and receiving visits there is none ; of genius and capacity none ; of manners none ; in handicraft and work there is no form of symmetric method or quality ; there are no good horses, no good dogs, grapes, mushmelons or first rate fruits, no ice or cold water, good bread or cooked food in the bazars, no hot-baths, no college, no candles, torches or candlesticks.

"In place of candles and torch they have a great dirty gang they call lamp-men (*diwati*), who in the left hand hold a smallish wooden tripod to one corner of which a thing like the top of a candlestick is fixed, having a wick in it about as thick as the thumb. In the right hand they hold a gourd, through a narrow slit made in which oil is let trickle in a thin thread when the wick needs it. Great people keep a hundred or two of these lamp-men. This is the Hindustani substitute for lamps and candlesticks ! If their rulers have work at night needing candles, these dirty lampmen bring these lamps, go close up and there stand.

"Except their large rivers and their standing-waters which flow in ravines or hollows (there are no waters), there are no running-waters in their gardens or residence (*imaratlar*). These residences have no charm, air (*hawa*), regularity or symmetry.

"Peasants and people of low standing go about naked. They tie on a thing called *languta*, a decency-clout which hangs two spans below the naval. From the tie of this pendant decency clout, another clout is passed between the thighs and made fast behind. Women also tie on a cloth (*lang*), one half of which goes round the waist, the other is thrown over the head.

"Pleasant things of Hindustan are that it is a large country and has masses of gold and silver. Its air in the rains is very fine. Sometimes it rains 10, 15 or 20 times a day ; torrents pour down all at once and rivers flow where no water has been. While it rains and through the rains, the air is remarkably fine ; not to be surpassed for healthiness and charm. The fault is that the air becomes very soft and damp. A bow of those (Transoxanian) countries after going through the rains in Hindustan, may not be drawn even ; it is ruined ; not only the bow, everything is affected, armour, book, cloth and utensils all : a house even does not last long. Not only in the rains but also in the cold and the hot seasons the airs are excellent ; at these times, however, the north-

west wind constantly gets up laden with dust and earth. It gets up in great strength every year in the heats, under the Bull and Twins, when the rains are near: so strong and carrying so much dust and earth that there is no seeing one another. People call this wind Darkener of the Sky (H. **andhi**). The weather is hot under the Bull and Twins but not intolerably so, not so hot as in Balkh and Kandhar and not for so long.

"Another good thing in Hindustan is that it has unnumbered and endless workmen of every kind. There is a fixed caste (**jam'i**) for every sort of work and for everything, which has done that work or that thing from father to son till now. Mulla Sharaf, writing in the **Zafar-nama** about the building of Timur Beg's stone Mosque, lays stress on the fact that on it 200 stone-cutters worked, from Azarbaijan, Fars, Hindustan and other countries. But 680 men worked daily on my buildings in Agra and of Agra stone-cutters only, while 1491 stone-cutters worked daily on my buildings in Agra, Sikri, Bina (Bayana), Dholpur, Gwalior and Kol. In the same way there are numberless artisans and workmen of every sort in Hindustan"<sup>1</sup>

### Estimate of Babur

Babur is one of the most interesting figures in the history of Medieval India. He was not only a warrior but a great scholar and poet. All his life he was struggling for glory and ultimately got the same. In his case, adversity was a blessing in disguise. He was possessed of such an indomitable will that no amount of difficulties could shake his faith in himself. He was a lover of nature. He loved poetry and drinking. He was frank and jovial. He retained these qualities up to the very end of his life. He was an orthodox Sunni but not a fanatic like Mahmud of Ghazni. He wrote about Hindus with contempt and recognised **Jehad** against them as a sacred duty. He ordered the construction of a tower of the skulls of the Hindus to be prepared at Fatehpur Sikri and Chanderi.

Sir E. Denison Ross maintains that Babur was one of those men who are so active in mind and body that they are never idle and always find time for everything. As a soldier, Babur was fearless in battles. As a general, he was a great tactician with a keen eye to detect any mistake on the part of his opponents. He was one of the first military commanders in Asia to appreciate the value of artillery. As a diplomat, he seems to have shown much more cunning and skill in dealing with the Afghans than with his own people. The manner in which he played off the rebellious Amirs of Sultan Ibrahim against each other was worthy of a Machiavelli.

It has rightly been pointed out by Dr. Tripathi that Babur combined the vigour and hardihood of the Turks and Mongols with the dash and courage of the Persians. He was a fine fencer, a good archer and superb horseman. He was never discouraged by defeats and he never shirked from hard life. He loved action. In grave

1. *Memoirs*, pp. 518-20.

crisis and heat of battle, he was resourceful. In strategy and tactics, he was undoubtedly much superior to any of his opponents in India and Afghanistan. Whether he was a military genius or not, he was the best among the Indian generals of his day<sup>1</sup>. To quote Dr. R.M. Tripathi, "Without depriving Akbar of his well-deserved greatness, it can be maintained that the seeds of his policy were sown by his illustrious grand-father. The conception of a new empire based on a political outlook as distinct from religious or sectarian, of the place of the crown in the State, of settling the Rajput problem by alliances and matrimonial contacts and of emphasising the cultural character of the court could be traced back to Babur. Thus Babur had not only shown the way to find a new empire but had also indicated the character and policy which should govern it. He had established a dynasty and a tradition in India which have few parallels in the history of any other country."<sup>2</sup>

According to Prof. Rushbrook Williams, "Babur possessed eight fundamental qualities—lofty judgment, noble ambition, the art of victory, the art of Government, the art of conferring prosperity upon his people, the talent of ruling mildly the people of God, ability to win the heart of his soldiers and love of justice." According to Havell, "His (Babur's) engaging personality, artistic temperament and romantic career make him one of the most attractive figures in the history of Islam." According to Dr. Smith, "Babur was a most brilliant Asiatic prince of his age and worthy of a high place among the sovereigns of India."

Lane-Poole has given the following estimate of Babur : "He is the link between Central Asia and India, between predatory hordes and Imperial government of Asia, Chingez and Timur, mixed in his veins, and to the daring and restlessness of the nomad Tartar, he joined the culture and urbanity of the Persian. He brought the energy of the Mongol, the courage and capacity of the Turks, to the listless Hindu ; and himself a soldier of fortune and no architect of Empire, he yet laid the first stone of the splendid fabric which his grandson Akbar achieved. His permanent place in history rests upon his Indian conquests, which opened the way for an imperial line, but his place in biography and in literature is determined rather by his daring adventures and preserving efforts in his earlier days, and by the delightful memoirs in which he related them. Soldier of fortune as he was, Babur was not the less a man of fine literary taste and fastidious critical perception. In Persian, the language of culture, the Latin of Central Asia, as it is of India, he was an accomplished poet, and in his native Turki he was the master of a pure and unaffected style alike in prose and verse."

Another writer says that Babur was one of the most attractive characters in Indian history. He was not only a soldier-statesman but also a poet and man of letters. He possessed a sense of humour. He had a zest for life which helped him to face the ups and downs of life

1. Tripathi, R. P. : *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, pp. 55-56.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

with cheer. His love for sport was infectious and spontaneous. He considered life as one long game of polo. He was not vindictive.

It is pointed out that what Babur had left undone was of greater importance than what he had actually accomplished. According to Erskine, although Babur's conquests gave him an extensive dominion, "there was little uniformity in the political situation of the different parts of this empire. Hardly any law could be regarded as universal but that of the unrestrained power of the prince. Each kingdom, each province, each district, and (we may almost say) every village, was governed, in ordinary matters, by its peculiar customs... There were no regular courts of law spread over the kingdom for the administration of justice. ...All differences relating to land, where they were not settled by the village officer, were decided by the district authorities, the collectors, the Zamindars or Jagirdars. The higher officers of government exercised not only civil but also criminal jurisdiction, even in capital cases, with little form or under little restraint." Babur did not leave behind him any "remarkable public and philanthropic institution" which would win over the goodwill of the people. No wonder, Babur "bequeathed to his son a monarchy which could be held together only by the continuance of war conditions, which in time of peace was weak, structureless and inveterate."

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## CHAPTER III

# Humayun (1530-56)

### His Early Life

Humayun, "the fortunate", was the eldest son of Babur and he had three brothers, viz., Kamran, Askari and Hindal. He was born at Kabul in March 1508. The name of his mother was Mahim Begam who was probably a Shia. Young Humayun learnt Turki, Arabic and Persian. On account of his careless habits, he did not acquire the exactness of a scholar. He was interested in mathematics, philosophy, astronomy and astrology. In his early youth, he was associated by his father with the government of the country. He was appointed the Governor of Badakshan at the age of 20. On the eve of the Battle of Panipat, 1526, he was sent against Hamid Khan who was defeated near Hissar Firoza. He participated in the Battles of Panipat and Kanwah. He was given the district of Hissar Firoza in 1526. He also got the jagir of Sambhal. After 1527, he was once again sent to Badakshan. He returned to Agra in 1529 and was ordered to manage his jagir of Sambhal. He was brought to Agra on account of his illness. His father died and he recovered.

An attempt was made to place Mahdi Khwaja on the throne of Agra. The reason was that according to the Prime Minister, Khalifa Nizam-ud-Din Ali, the interests of the State would be better served if a stronger person was put on the throne. Mahdi Khwaja was the brother-in-law of Babur. He was an experienced and competent administrator. On the other hand, Humayun had not shown any signs of greatness. At the eleventh hour, the conspiracy fell through on account of the following words of Mahdi Khwaja: "God willing, my first act (as king) would be to flay you and the other traitors." Although there was some confusion for four days Humayun successfully seated himself on the throne of Agra on 30th December 1530.

### Difficulties of Humayun

The throne inherited by Humayun was not a bed of roses. Babur had practically got no time to consolidate his position and authority. Before he could put the whole country on a stable basis, he was removed from the scene. According to Erskine, Humayun "had entered the country as a stranger and a spoiler; he had defeated

the armies and broken the power of the reigning dynasty ; but the only hold which he, or his race yet had upon the people of India was military force." The Rajputs had not been completely crushed. They had merely submitted before the storm. The result was that the hold of Humayun over the country was not strong.

There was no law of primogeniture among the Muslims. The result was that after the death of a king, there followed a war of succession. Every prince asserted his claim to the throne. According to Erskine, "The sword was the grand arbiter of right ; and every son was prepared to try his fortune against his brothers."

The army at the disposal of Humayun was not dependable. It was a mixed body of adventurers. Some of them were Uzbeks and Mughals and others were Indians, Afghans, Persians and Chaghtais.

In addition to the claims of his three brothers, Humayun had to deal with many Khans or nobles. They were busy in intrigues against the new Emperor and many of them did not consider the kingdom of Delhi and Agra beyond the scope of their ambitions. The result was that instead of three, Humayun had innumerable rivals.

It is true that the Afghans were defeated in the Battle of Panipat (1526) and the Battle of Ghagra (1529), but they were not completely crushed. Moreover, they had not forgotten the days when they were the rulers of the country and aspired to restore their rule. "Though repeatedly defeated in the field, they were still numerous and powerful, ripe for revolt and ready on the first signal to fly to arms in what was a personal as well as a national cause." The Afghans had in Mahmood Lodi a rallying point. All the Afghan nobles supported the cause of Mahmood Lodi. Not only this, Sher Khan had already started his career of adventure and conquest in Bengal and Bihar and he was trying to organise the Afghans for governing the country.

Humayun had to meet a great rival in Bahadur Shah of Gujarat,<sup>1</sup> who had united the provinces of Malwa and Gujarat and

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1. Bahadur was the son of Muzaffar II who ascended the throne of Gujarat in 1511. He was not satisfied with his father's arrangement regarding the distribution of Jagirs. He himself was given the villages of Kenj, Koha and Nabhah as a jagir. He came under the influence of the Shaikhs of Islam. Not satisfied with his father's treatment, Bahadur went to Delhi where he was received well by Ibrahim Lodi who at that time was making preparations to fight against Babur. According to Abu Turab, Bahadur was present in the Battle of Panipat (1529), but Babur tells us that Bahadur did not take part in the battle. It is stated that Bahadur was so popular among the Afghan nobles that plot was prepared to put him on the Delhi throne. Ibrahim became jealous and consequently Bahadur left Delhi for Jaunpur to become its head. At that time, he heard the news that his father had died and another person had been put on the throne of Gujarat ; Bahadur marched towards Gujarat and after defeating the usurper, put himself on the throne of his parents. All his rivals were disposed of one by one.

was thinking in terms of conquering the whole of Rajputana. As in the case of Sher Khan, Bahadur Shah also aimed at the overlordship of India, "using the relatives of the late Lodi Sultan of Delhi as stalking horses."

Humayun made a mistake in showing kindness to his brothers. In accordance with the wishes of his father, he gave Sambhal to Askari and Alwar to Hindal. As regards Kamran, he gave him the provinces of Kabul and Kandhar. In spite of this, Kamran was not satisfied. He gave out that he was going to see his brother to congratulate him on his accession to the throne. While doing so, he took along with him a big army and with its help he was able to bring the whole of the Punjab under his control. Humayun did not think it prudent to put up a fight with Kamran and consequently agreed to give the province of the Punjab to him. He also gave him the district of Hissar Firoza. The possession of Hissar Firoza gave Kamran control over the high road between Delhi and the Punjab. The cession of the Punjab, Kabul and Kandhar to Kamran was a suicidal step. Humayun was deprived of the territory which had been longest under the control of his father and from which revenue was coming regularly. He was deprived of the source from which he could have recruited his new army. He was left only with that empire which was newly conquered and over which his hold was not secure.

It is true that Humayun was faced with many difficulties but there is no doubt that he could have overcome them if he had possessed tact and strong will-power. Unfortunately, he did not possess such a character. According to Lane-Poole, "He was incapable of sustained effort and after a moment of triumph would bury himself in his harem and dream away the precious hours in the opium-eaters' paradise whilst his enemies were thundering at the gate. Naturally kind, he forgave when he should have punished; light-hearted and sociable, he revelled at the table when he ought to have been in the saddle. His character attracts but never dominates. In private life, he might have been a delightful companion and a staunch

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*(Contd. from p. 24).*

After seating himself on the throne, Bahadur organised a large army which contained 10,000 foreign mercenaries. He captured Ahmednagar in 1528. He fought against Sultan Mahmud Khilji of Mandu, defeated him, imprisoned him and annexed his territory in 1531. Nizamshah and the ruler of Khandesh acknowledged him as their superior and agreed to his name being read in the Khutba.

Bahadur had a large army. He employed two Turkish Captains, Amir Mustafa, who was given the title of Rumi Khan, and Khwaja Safar called Salmani. Bahadur tried to crush the power of the Portuguese but in 1534 he entered into a treaty with them by which Bassein and the adjoining territory were given to them. Master of a rich kingdom and vast resources, Bahadur desired to extend his sphere of influence towards Rajputana.

It is to be observed that Bahadur Shah was a brave, warlike and generous ruler of high ambitions and winsome manners. Kind-hearted and generous, he was ferocious in dealing with his enemies and slew them ruthlessly. He was fond of displaying the trappings of royalty and loved magnificence and power.

friend ; his virtues were Christian, and his whole life was that of a gentleman. But as a king he was a failure. **His name means fortune and never was an unlucky sovereign more miscalled."**

### **Expedition of Kalinjar (1531)**

In 1531, Humayun besieged the fort of Kalinjar in Bundelkhand. It was believed that the Raja was probably in league with the Afghans. The siege of the fort lasted for many months and Humayun was forced to make peace and accept a huge indemnity from the Raja. It is stated that the Kalinjar expedition was a folly on the part of Humayun. Humayun was not able to defeat the Raja and consequently failed in his mission. The Raja could have been won over if Humayun had handled the situation tactfully.

### **Battle of Dourah (1532)**

One of the reasons why Humayun had to give up the siege of Kalinjar was that he had to meet the danger from the Afghans. Under the leadership of Mahmood Lodi, the Afghans of Bihar were marching on to the province of Jaunpur. They had advanced as far as the Barabanki District. Humayun defeated the Afghans in the Battle of Dourah or Dadrah in August 1532.

### **Siege of Chunar (1532)**

After defeating the Afghans, Humayun besieged the fort of Chunar under Sher Khan. The siege lasted from September to December 1532. But instead of conquering it, Humayun "accepted a purely perfunctory submission." It was a mistake on the part of Humayun to do so. He ought to have crushed the power of Sher Khan who was undoubtedly the rising star. He had to pay heavily for his mistake later on.

After his return from Chunar, Humayun wasted a year and a half in feasts and festivities in Agra and Delhi. We are told that he honoured the nobles with robes of honour and Arab horses. 1,200 persons received robes, 2,000 were given outer garments of gold, brocade and gilt buttons. Humayun also spent money on building a big citadel at Delhi called Din Panah. This Humayun did in spite of the fact that he was getting very disquieting news from Gujarat where Bahadur Shah was increasing his power every day. According to Prof. Ruskbrook Williams, "There is a repetition of the old story of the financial breakdown in the time of Humayun, accompanied by revolution, intrigue and dethronement of a dynasty."

### **Wars with Bahadur Shah (1535-36)**

War with Bahadur Shah was inevitable. Bahadur Shah had annexed Malwa in 1531, captured the fort of Raisin in 1532 and defeated the Sisodia chief of Chittor in 1533. He was an ambitious man and aimed at becoming the Emperor of India himself. He had helped Tatar Khan, son of Alam Khan Lodi, in raising a strong army and capturing Bayana which was a Moghul possession. He offended Humayun by giving shelter to Mohammad Zaman Mirza who had

escaped from Humayun. He also refused to hand him over to Humayun even when the latter requested him to do so. No wonder, Humayun made up his mind to proceed personally against Bahadur Shah.

At that time, Bahadur Shah was besieging the fort of Chittor. Rani Karnawati, mother of the Raja, appealed to Humayun for help. She also sent a Rakhi to him implying thereby that she considered him to be a brother and asking for Humayun's help. It is true that Humayun accepted the Rakhi and proceeded towards Chittor but, later on, he changed his mind on the way. Bahadur Shah was confident that true to the traditions of Islam, Humayun would not attack him when he was engaged in war with a non-Muslim, and he was right in his belief. So long as the siege of Chittor continued, Humayun did not raise his finger against Bahadur Shah. After the fall of Chittor, Humayun started his operations against Bahadur Shah. The latter was literally besieged in his camp and his supplies ran short. He was faced with the prospect of starvation and he ran away in April 1535 and took shelter in the Fort of Mandu.

Critics point out that it was not statesmanship on the part of Humayun to have kept quiet when Bahadur Shah was busy against the Raja of Chittor. He should have attacked Bahadur Shah and crushed him. Had he attacked at once, he would have succeeded in inflicting a decisive blow on Bahadur Shah. Moreover, by doing so, he would have won over the Rajputs to his own side. His chivalry towards a Muslim enemy may be praiseworthy but undoubtedly his policy was wrong.

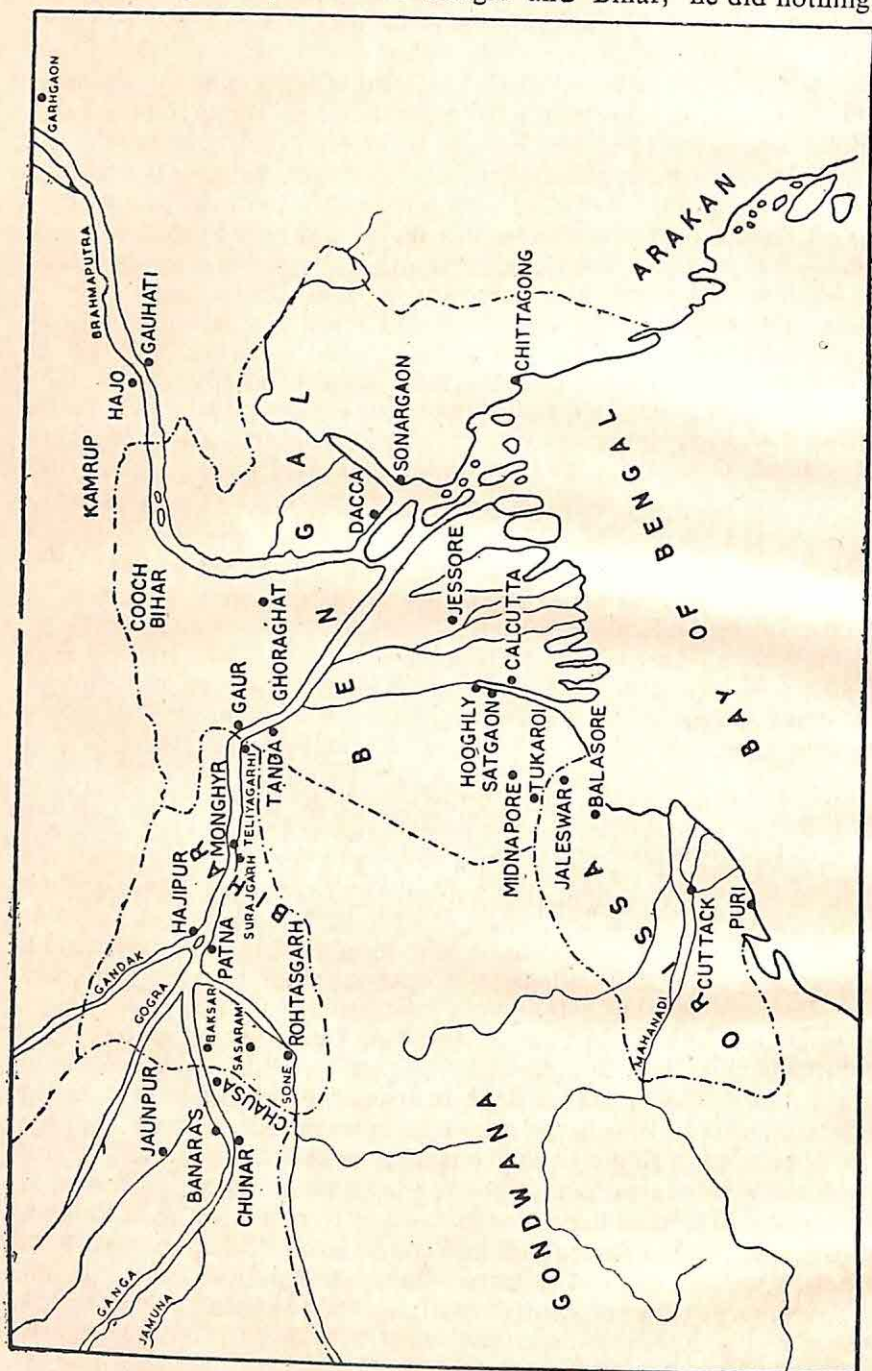
After the flight of Bahadur Shah, Humayun besieged the fort of Mandu and captured it. Bahadur Shah ran to Champanir which was also besieged and ultimately conquered by Humayun. Ahmedabad and Cambay were also captured by Humayun. Bahadur Shah took refuge in the island of Diu and by August 1535 the conquest of Central Gujarat was completed by Humayun.

It is true that the capture of Mandu and Champanir were great achievements, but unfortunately Humayun made no arrangement to consolidate his position. He wasted a lot of time in merry-making, and squandered away the treasure that had fallen into his hands at Champanir. It was the chaotic state of administrative affairs in Gujarat that helped Bahadur Shah to recover his position. Bahadur Shah sent Imad-ul-Mulk to Ahmedabad to collect revenues and the latter succeeded in doing so and raising a powerful army. Humayun recaptured Ahmedabad and appointed his brother Askari as Governor of Gujarat. Unfortunately, Askari mismanaged the affairs of Gujarat and Bahadur Shah was again able to get back a large number of towns. The local chiefs also helped Bahadur Shah and the result was that Gujarat was completely lost in 1536. Malwa was also lost to the Mughals. "One year had seen the rapid conquest of the two great provinces: the next saw them as quickly lost."

#### **War with Sher Khan (1537-39)**

After the loss of Gujarat in 1536, Humayun stayed in Agra

for a year. Although he got information that Sher Khan was strengthening his position in Bengal and Bihar, he did nothing to



move against him. Sher Khan had already made himself the master of the whole of Bihar. He had also defeated the King of Bengal in 1534 and 1536. It was only in 1537 that Humayun felt that he should do something against Sher Khan. He besieged the fort of

Chunar which belonged to Sher Khan. The siege lasted for 6 months and in spite of the best efforts of Humayun, could not be captured. Ultimately, it was captured by means of a trick. The capture of the fort of Chunar was a great military achievement, but it was of no substantial use to Humayun as this fort did not command any land-route. Humayun had wasted many valuable months in Chunar for nothing.

After capturing Chunar, Humayun proceeded towards Banaras and stayed there for some time. Negotiations were opened with Sher Khan for a compromise. Instead of taking action against Sher Khan at once, Humayun wavered and ultimately decided to conquer Bengal. He reached Teliagarhi in May, 1538 and found the road to Gaur blocked by Jalal Khan, son of Sher Khan. There was fighting and Jalal Khan retired. In August 1538, Humayun reached Gaur. Here again Humayun wasted about 8 months in merry-making. He neglected fighting during this period. During this interval, Sher Khan strengthened his position and cut off the communications between Delhi and Bengal. He also captured Kara, Kanauj and Sambhal. By January 1539, the whole of the country between the Kosi and the Ganga was in the hands of Sher Khan. Hindal left Bihar and retired to Agra. When Humayun realised the dangerous position in which he was placed, he decided to return to Agra immediately. He started his return journey in March, 1539.

### **Battle of Chausa, 1539**

Sher Khan blocked the road to Agra and only a decisive victory over him could have helped Humayun to reach Agra. The armies of Humayun and Sher Khan faced each other for three months from April 1539 to June 1539 and neither of them started the fighting. Delay was in the interests of Sher Khan and Humayun did not appreciate this point. The result was that after three months, the rains started and the Mughal encampment was flooded. That created confusion in the armies of Humayun. Sher Khan found his opportunity and the battle of Chausa was fought on 26th June, 1539. Humayun was defeated and with difficulty he saved his life with the help of a water-carrier. He even lost his wives.

### **Battle of Kanauj, 1540**

After his defeat at Chausa, Humayun reached Agra and called all his brothers for consultation. Kamran offered to fight against Sher Khan with 20,000 troops but Humayun rejected the offer because he did not trust his brother. He was prepared to accept the help, if Kamran would lend him his troops. The differences between the two brothers could not be composed and consequently Kamran left with his troops for Lahore. Somehow, Humayun managed to raise an army and the effective fighting strength of the Mughal soldiers was about 40,000. In May, 1540 was fought the battle of Kanauj. In this battle, the Mughal artillery did not play any part as it could not be taken to the front when Sher Khan started the attack. In the case of Kanauj also, Humayun did not start the attack for full one month. The battle of Kanauj was fought and lost.

Humayun became a fugitive and Sher Khan became the master of Agra and Delhi.

"Thus began a weary exile which lasted for nearly 15 years and was endured only by the greatest fortitude and perseverance, though it was constantly prolonged by Humayun's inability to command respect and faithful allegiance."<sup>1</sup>

### **Humayun's Efforts to regain Throne**

After his defeat, Humayun came to Agra but left soon after. He tried to go to Kashmir but Kamran blocked his way. Ultimately, he decided to go to Sind.

Humayun was invited by Maldeo of Marwar and he accepted the invitation. On the way, he came to know that Maldeo had changed his mind and really wanted to arrest him with a view to please Sher Khan. Under the circumstances, he had to retrace his steps to Sind.

He got shelter from the Raja of Amarkot. In 1542, Akbar was born there.

Finding his position difficult and no prospects of success in the future, Humayun left India. He tried to get help from his brother Kamran but failed. The latter tried to arrest him. Ultimately, Humayun went to Persia where Shah Tahmasp welcomed him. The Shah insisted that Humayun must become a Shia and ultimately Humayun accepted the condition. The Shah agreed to give 14,000 men to Humayun on the condition that Kandhar was to be given to him. With the help of the Persian troops, Humayun captured Kandhar and handed over the same to the Persians. However, Humayun occupied the same after the death of Shah Tahmasp. He also captured Kabul in November 1544 and Kamran ran away to Sind.

Although Humayun had got Kabul and Kandhar, his difficulties were not over. He fell ill and Kamran took advantage of the situation and recaptured Kabul in 1546. The followers of Humayun deserted him. But when he himself recovered from his illness he was able to recapture Kabul after a siege in 1547. Kamran managed to slip away. He appeared on the scene once again in 1548, but was defeated. Once again, Humayun forgave Kamran, but the latter managed to occupy Kandhar again in 1549. Humayun had to struggle very hard this time to recapture Kabul. As a matter of fact, he was himself severely wounded. Kamran ran away but was captured. Humayun ordered his eyes to be taken out. Kamran went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and he died there in 1557. Askari was also sent to Mecca and he never returned. Hindal was killed.

After securing his position, Humayun continued to follow a policy of waiting for a favourable opportunity to attack India and recover his previous territory.

1. *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 37.

Sher Shah, the victor of Kanauj, died in 1545. He was succeeded by his son, Islam Shah, who ruled up to 1553. He was succeeded by Muhammad Adil Shah. He was very fond of pleasures and left the affairs of his Government into the hands of Hemu, his Minister. His authority was challenged by Ibrahim Shah and Sikandar Shah. There were a large number of bloody battles among the various rivals. The net result of all this was that the Sur Empire was broken up.

Humayun made preparations for his attack on India. He reached Peshawar in December 1554. He occupied Lahore in February 1555. Dipalpur was occupied in March 1555. The battle of Machiwara<sup>1</sup> was fought in May 1555 between the Mughals and the Afghans and ended in the victory for the Mughals. In June 1555 was fought the **Battle of Sirhind** in which Sikandar Sur was defeated.<sup>2</sup> After his defeat, Sikandar Sur ran away to Mankot and from there to the hills of the north-western Punjab. Humayun entered Delhi in July 1555 after an interval of about 15 years. He deputed his son, Akbar, to pursue Sikandar Sur.

After recovering his throne, Humayun "devoted himself to a general superintendence of the affairs of his kingdom, and to watching the progress of his armies which he had sent in various directions to the different provinces. He saw clearly that there were great defects in the system of government of the Empire, and set himself to

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1. The following is a contemporary account of battle of the Machiwara : "The Afghans began the battle with their archers, but as it was getting dark, the arrows took little effect on the Mughals, but the Afghans being greatly annoyed by the fire (atashi) threw themselves into a neighbouring village. As most of the houses in the villages of Hindustan are thatched, a fire broke out, and lighting up the field of battle, the (Mughal) archers came out and plied their weapons heartily by the light of the burning village. The enemy, in the glare of the fire, presented a fine mark for their shafts, and being unable to endure longer, took to flight."

2. The following is the contemporary account of Battle of Sirhind ; "On hearing of this defeat, (Sultan) Sikander Afghan marched forth to take his revenge, with 80,000 horsemen and elephants and artillery. He marched to Sirhind and there he entrenched and fortified his camp. The Chaghatai general strengthened the fortifications of Sirhind and making a good show of resistance, they wrote letters to Humayun for reinforcements. Thereupon he sent Prince Akbar towards Sirhind, and as he approached, the generals came out to meet him. The forces were drawn out in array with the greatest show against the enemy, who were four times more numerous than the Mughals.

"For some days the daring spirits in both armies challenged each other to combat and displayed their valour, till at length the vanguard of Prince Akbar was drawn up for battle. A second division under Bairam Khan (Khan-Khanan) on the one side and on the other a third division under Iskandar Khan.....attacked the enemy. In the engagement all the nobles exhibited dauntless courage and the most determined resolution. The Afghans, 100,000 in number, were defeated, being inferior in courage, and (Sultan) Sikander fled.

"The victors pursued the enemy and put many of them to death ; and having secured an enormous booty, returned triumphant to wait upon the Emperor and congratulate him. Under his orders a despatch of the victory was drawn, in which the honour of the victory was ascribed to Prince Akbar and this was circulated in all directions."

devising means of improving it. The plan which he projected was to separate the Empire into several great divisions, each of them to have a local capital, and a board of administration for directing local affairs. Delhi, Agra, Kanauj, Jaunpur, Mandur, and Lahore were among the capitals fixed upon. To each of them was to be assigned a considerable military force, under an able general so as to render it independent of assistance from the others; while the Emperor was to give unity to the whole, by visiting them in turn with an army of about 12,000 horse which were to be under his own immediate command, and at all times ready to move in any direction. This plan, however, he never had time, had he even possessed sufficient steadiness, to carry into execution."

Although Humayun had recovered his kingdom, he was not destined to rule the same for long. In January, 1556, he met his tragic end by slipping from the famous building known as Din Panah. It is stated that before his death, Humayun used to repeat with great emotion the following mystical verses which he had heard from a supernatural voice :

"O Lord, of Thine infinite goodness make me Thine own ;  
Make me a partner of the knowledge of Thy attributes ;  
I am broken-hearted from the cares and sorrows of life ;  
O call to Thee Thy poor Madman (lover)  
O grant me my release."

Nizam-ud-Din has given the following account of the death of Humayun in *Tabakat-i-Akbari*: "On January 17th, 1556, at sunset the Emperor ascended on the roof of the library and there stood for a short time. As he was descending the Muezzin cried aloud the summons to prayer, and he reverently sat down on the second step. When he was getting up again, his foot slipped and he fell down the stairs to the ground. The people in attendance were greatly shocked, and the Emperor was taken up senseless and carried into the palace. After a short time he rallied and spoke. The Court physicians exerted all their powers, but in vain. Next day he grew worse and his case was beyond medical help. Shaikh Juli was sent to the Punjab to summon Prince Akbar. On January 25th, 1556, at the setting of the sun, he left this world for Paradise."

According to Lane-Poole, "Humayun tumbled through life and he tumbled out of it." What Lane-Poole wanted to convey was that first of all Humayun lost everything and later on regained what he had lost. It can be pointed out that Humayun had to meet many difficulties at the time of his accession to the throne. He could not overcome those difficulties and became a fugitive after the Battle of Kanauj in 1540. Later on, with the help of the King of Persia, he recaptured Kabul and Kandhar and ultimately was able to re-ascend the throne of Delhi and Agra after defeating Sikandar Sur.

### **Causes of Humayun's failure**

(1) A reference may be made to some of the important causes which were responsible for the failure of Humayun. It has already

been pointed out that Humayun divided his Empire among his various brothers. He should not have given Kabul, Kandhar and the Punjab to Kamran. By doing so, he weakened his own hands. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "It was a mistake on Humayun's part to make these concessions, because they created a barrier between him and the lands beyond the Afghan hills. Kamran could henceforward, as Prof. Rushbrook Williams observes, cut the root of his military power by merely stopping where he was. Besides, the cession of Hissar Firoza was a blunder, for it gave Kamran command of the new military road which ran from Delhi to Kandhar."

(1A) Another cause of the failure of Humayun was the hostility of his brothers for whom he had shown so great kindness. They did not help him when he was in trouble. This was particularly so on the occasion of Battle of Chausa and Kanauj. However, this view is not accepted by Dr. Tripathi. He points out that the behaviour of Kamran during the first ten years of Humayun's rule was not at all hostile. As a matter of fact, he had been absolutely loyal to him. It was only after the Battle of Kanauj that Kamran lost all faith in his brother and decided to leave him so that he may save some of the Mughal Empire from passing into the hands of Sher Shah. If after the defeat of Kanauj, Kamran had continued to identify himself with Humayun, there was every likelihood of his losing Kabul, Ghazni, Badkshan and Kandhar. So far as Askari was concerned, he never rebelled against his brother. He served his brother to the best of his ability and if that was not much, that was not his fault. He was in almost all the important battles fought by Humayun. When Kamran left Humayun after the Battle of Kanauj, Askari also left him and was put in charge of Kandhar by Kamran. However, it cannot be denied that Askari connived at the flight of Humayun to Persia. He also treated Akbar with great kindness and affection. So far as Hindal was concerned, he was only a half-hearted rival. He was a man of weak mind and was persuaded by some nobles to revolt. It is true that his inaction was partly responsible for the defeat of Humayun at Chausa but that was not due to any personal ambition of his own. He was afraid of punishment if he ran away from Bihar to Agra. It is true that he left Humayun for some time but he joined him as soon as possible. The relations between the two brothers were always cordial. The defeat at Chausa might have been avoided if Kamran and Hindal had acted with vigour. However, all that can be said against them is that their inaction was ill-devised, short-sighted and unfortunate. Humayun's exile was not due to his failure at Chausa but at Kanauj and for that none of his brothers was responsible. Hence Dr. Tripathi contends that Humayun's brothers contributed very little, if at all, to his ultimate failure.

(2) It was the height of folly on the part of Humayun not to have done anything for the welfare of his own people during the ten years he was on the throne (1530-40). On the other hand, he spent all these years in wars. The result was that the treasury was empty and the people were discontented. There was none to fight for Humayun.

(3) Humayun failed to make a correct estimate of the growing power of Sher Khan. To begin with, he treated him with contempt. He ought to have appreciated the dangers ahead and taken a stiff action against him from the very outset. He ought to have nipped the evil in the bud. His delay in taking action against Sher Khan resulted in his own failure.

(4) The same can be said about Humayun's treatment of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. Humayun should have attacked and finished Bahadur Shah when the latter was busy against Chittor. He foolishly gave Bahadur Shah time. Humayun should not have spent so many months in dealing with Gujarat. He should have completely crushed the power of Bahadur Shah in Gujarat once for all and thereby avoided the possibility of future trouble. He ought not to have wasted time in festivities and merry-making at Mandu. Moreover, during the Mughal occupation of Gujarat, Humayun ought to have carried out such administrative reforms in that territory as would have won over the people to his side. Unfortunately, the military occupation of Gujarat created resentment against the Mughals.

(5) After his defeat at Chausa in 1539, Humayun did nothing to recapture the territory from Kanauj to Banaras. On the other hand, he always remained on the defensive. Such a policy was not conducive to the maintenance of his prestige.

(6) Humayun committed many mistakes in the Battle of Kanauj. He foolishly chose a low land for his encampment. For two months, he remained inactive and did not raise his finger against the enemy. As Sher Khan attacked all of a sudden, Humayun could not make use of his artillery and the result was his failure.

(7) Humayun did not behave like a statesman. He pardoned again and again those who revolted against him. This he did, not only in the case of Kamran but also in the case of Mohammad Zaman Mirza. Such a treatment could not create an atmosphere of constant loyalty towards the Empire. Everybody knew that in spite of his faithlessness, he would be pardoned by the Emperor.

(8) Another cause of Humayun's failure was his own character. He could not stick to a job.<sup>1</sup> He always worked by fits and starts. The result was that before anything was done completely, his mind passed on to something else leaving the first one half-complete. Such a method is not conducive to success.

However, Dr. Tripathi differs from this view. He maintains that the character of Humayun was not responsible for his failures. According to him, Humayun was brave, cool, calm and dignified. He was capable of extraordinary activity. He was kind, generous,

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1. Humayun did not follow the following advice given to him by his father: "The world is his who exerts himself. Fail not to commit yourself strenuously to meet every emergency; indolence and ease agree ill with kingship."

large-hearted, intelligent, cultured, refined and noble. He was an able and experienced general. His love for opium was not greater than that of Babur. Dr. Tripathi thinks that if Babur, instead of fighting against Ibrahim Lodi, had to fight against Sher Khan, it is doubtful if he would have been successful. He had not so good an army as Babur had and he had to fight against two great rulers like Sher Khan and Bahadur Shah. Sher Khan had more experience, organizing ability, craft and political opportunism. He had an army which was inspired by national enthusiasm to recover the Empire lost by them. By this time, the Afghans had become familiar with fire-arms. Bahadur Shah of Gujarat was served by the entire moral and material resources of Gujarat. No wonder, Humayun failed against them.

(9) The one great defect of Humayun was that he did not suspect anybody. He believed in whatever he was told by anybody. The defeat of Chausa might have been averted if he had not believed Sher Khan and had acted according to his judgment. This weakness of his was exploited on more than one occasion by Sher Khan and the Afghun ruler of Sind.

(10) According to Tripathi, Humayun was also the victim of his fate. Askari failed to persuade Tardi Beg to help him. His decision to come to the north resulted in the loss of Gujarat and Malwa. If Mahmood Shah of Bengal had not surrendered earlier, there would not have been so much trouble for Humayun. If there had not been unusual rains in May 1540 which flooded his camp at Kanauj, Humayun might not have lost the battle. It appears that fate was always against him. Moreover, Humayun had not the flexibility of mind to adjust himself to changed circumstances. He is said to have possessed a one-track mind. He allowed himself to fall into difficulties without realizing the full implications. It is pointed out that there was no necessity of fighting in Gujarat and Bengal. He could have postponed action in those distant provinces till such time as he had consolidated his own position. His calculations were wrong and no wonder he lost his empire.

### **Estimate of Humayun**

It is admitted on all hands that Humayun was a thorough gentleman. He was an ideal son, an ideal husband, an ideal father and an ideal brother. In spite of the acts of treachery on the part of his brothers and others, he forgave them again and again. But this virtue was the undoing of his career.

Humayun was a thoroughly cultured man. He was very polite in his conversation. According to Ferishta, Humayun was "of elegant stature and of a bronze complexion. The mildness and benevolence of Humayun's character were excessive, if there can be excess in such noble qualities." He "possessed the virtues of charity and munificence in a very high degree."

Lane-Poole observes : "The young Prince was indeed a gallant and lovable fellow, courteous, witty and accomplished like his father, warm-hearted and emotional, almost quixotic in his notions of

honour and magnanimity, personally brave and capable of great energy on occasions. But he lacked character and resolution. He was incapable of sustained effort and after a moment of triumph would busy himself in his harem and dream away the precious hours in the opium-eater's paradise, whilst his enemies were thundering on the gate. Naturally kind, he forgave when he should have punished; light-hearted and social, he revelled at the table when he ought to have been in the saddle. **His character attracts, but never dominates.** In private life, he might have been a delightful companion and a staunch friend, his virtues were Christian and his whole life was that of a gentleman. But as a king he was a failure. His name means 'fortune', and never was an unlucky sovereign more miscalled. His end was of a piece with his character. If there was a possibility of falling, Humayun was not to miss it. He tumbled through life and tumbled out of it."

Humayun was a true Muslim, but he was not a fanatic. His chief Queen, Hamida Banu Begum, was a Shia. Bairam Khan was also a Shia. He knew how to treat with people who differed from him in religion.

Undoubtedly, Humayun was a good fighter. It is true that he failed at many places but everywhere he showed that he was a great fighter. He was not afraid of the battlefield and fought very many battles. However, he lacked the quality of concentration and that proved to be his undoing.

Humayun was not a great administrator. During the period of 10 years when he was the king, he did nothing to improve the administrative system of the country. There is no exaggeration in saying that Humayun had no administrative aptitude and that is why he shirked from this work. He made absolutely no solid reforms which can stand to his credit. His over-generosity and leniency towards his relatives ruined his administration.

The indecisive temperament of Humayun was partly due to his habit of eating opium. He took delight in merry-making and wasted the precious time which he ought to have utilised in crushing the power of such rivals as Bahadur Shah and Sher Khan.

Nizam-ud-Din Ahmed makes the following observations about the character of Humayun: "His angelic character was adorned with every manly virtue, and in courage and heroism he excelled all the princes of his time. All the wealth of Hindustan would not have sufficed to maintain his generosity. In the sciences of astrology and mathematics, he was unrivalled. He made good verses, and all the learned and great and good of the time were admitted to his society and passed the night in his company. Great decorum was observed in his receptions, and all learned discussions were conducted in the most orderly manner. The light of favour shone upon men of ability and worth during his reign. Such was his clemency that he repeatedly pardoned the crimes of Mirza Kamran and the Chaghatai nobles, when they were taken prisoners and were in his power. He was particular about his ablutions and never allowed the name of God to pass from his tongue until he had performed them."

According to Havell, "Like Babur his education and tastes were entirely Persian...but while Timur and Babur were strong individualists and men of action, never allowing themselves to be turned from any set purpose, either from the preaching of a *mulla* or the prognostications of a soothsayer, Humayun was but a weak dilettante who sought the advice of the court astrologers in all state affairs... In spite of these precautions the stars in their courses fought against Humayun... He was never wanting in personal courage, but the restoration of the Mughal dynasty was more due to the steadfast loyalty of his comrades and the weakness of Sher Shah's descendants, than to his own military capacity. The contrast between Sher Shah and Humayun could not be better illustrated than it is in the two great monuments which perpetuate their memory. Humayun's mausoleum at Delhi portrays in its polished elegance the facile *chermeur* and rather superficial dilettante of the Persian school, whose best title to fame is that he was the father of Akbar; Sher Shah's at Sahseram, the stern strong man, egoist and empire-builder who trampled all his enemies under foot, and ruled Hindustan with a rod of iron."

Elphinstone observes : "Though not deficient in intelligence, he had little energy ; and though free from vices and violent passions, he was no less devoid of principles and affections. By nature he was more inclined to ease than ambition : yet he had been brought up under Babur and accustomed to bodily and mental exertion ; he never was wanting to the exigencies of his situation, or quite lost the advantages of his birth and pretensions though he never turned them to the best account... He was not naturally either cunning or cruel : and if he had been a limited monarch in Europe, he would most likely not have been treacherous or bloody than Charles II."

According to Malleon, "Brave, genial, witty, a charming companion, highly educated, generous, and merciful, Humayun was even less qualified than his father to found a dynasty on principles which should endure. Allied to his many virtues were many compromising defects. He was volatile, thoughtless, and unsteady. He was swayed by no strong sense of duty. His generosity was apt to degenerate into prodigality ; his attachments into weakness. He was unable to concentrate his energies for a time in any serious direction, whilst for comprehensive legislation he had neither the genius nor the inclination. He was thus eminently unfitted to consolidate the conquests his father had bequeathed to him." Erskine says : "The real character of Humayun may be better gleaned from the events of his reign than from the representations of his historians... In the earlier part of his reign, seconded by the veteran officers and well-trained army which his father had left him, he over-ran, first the kingdoms of Malwa and Gujarat, and next those of Bihar and Bengal, very important and glorious acquisitions ; but destitute of those powers of combination which are necessary for consolidating and retaining a conquest, as bravery and a well-disciplined army are for making it, he was compelled to abandon them all ; and the greater part of his reign presented a series of reverses, rebellions,

and anarchy—the fruit of his lack of political firmness and determination.”

According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, “Though not wanting in personal courage, he was not a great general like his father or strategist like Sher Shah. His military plans were defective and were never properly executed. Sometimes he withdrew from an important campaign for fantastic reason as he did when Bahadur Shah was laying siege to Chittor. His readiness to offer the choice between the olive branch and the sword was often mistaken for weakness. A study of his battles shows clearly his incapacity for grand strategy and correct appraisal of the enemy’s strength. His first successes were always turned into defeats, for he was never able to consolidate his gains. His want of firmness lent encouragement to the plans of his opponents. Malwa, Gujarat, Bengal and Bihar, the Doab, Delhi and the Punjab slipped out of his grasp one by one and he could neither crush the treachery of his seditious nobles nor could he raise a powerful army to contend against his foes. He was indolent and his love of pleasure in his early years hampered his efforts to maintain the empire. He pardoned rebels and traitors again and again and hesitated to deal drastically even with an insolent and bigoted court minion like Abul Maali. At times it seemed as if he was courting trouble for himself. After his return from Persia, he became more steady of purpose and showed greater energy and determination. He fought long and hard in the Afghan region and never wavered or despaired although he had to deal with treacherous officers at home and a powerful enemy abroad. The most prominent trait of his character was perseverance and this proved an inestimable blessing to him throughout his career. Without this, it would have been impossible for him to reconquer the kingdom of Hindustan.”

Dr. R.P. Tripathi points out that Humayun was neither favoured by luck nor so gifted by nature as to be able to sustain the weight of the great problems which he was called upon to tackle. His chief opponent, Sher Shah, had the advantage of both. Humayun possessed a one-track mind and therefore failed to provide for such situations as might arise at the failure of his original plan. He allowed himself to be drawn easily into new problems and situations without realising their full implications probably because he was not aware of his own limitations. There was no necessity for his operations in much distant provinces as Gujarat and Bengal. Their conquest could have been undertaken after he had consolidated his position in Malwa and Bihar. However, he allowed himself to be tempted into attempting at a stretch what should have been done step by step. His political calculations were defective. They clearly show that he was neither a good judge of men and their motives nor of political situations and administrative problems. As a diplomat and politician, he was no match for Babur or Sher Shah. He lacked the ability to weave into a compact fabric his rapid territorial acquisition which he made in a fit of complaisance or absentmindedness. He failed to retain his grip over them and their loss had disastrous reactions on his fortune and empire.

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- |                   |  |
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## CHAPTER IV

# Sher Shah Sur and His Successors (1540-56)

According to Dr. Tripathi, "Sher Shah is one of those great men of history who blossomed out of dust into glory and rose to the highest pinnacle of distinction by dint of their courage, ability and resourcefulness as also by the strength of their sword. He was neither born in purple nor could he boast of his origin from any high family of religious or military leaders."<sup>1</sup>

The original name of Sher Shah, the Lion King, was Farid. He was the grandson of Ibrahim Sur and the son of Hassan. His grandfather had come to India in search of employment in the time of Bahlol Lodi and joined service in the Punjab. Farid is said to have been born in the Punjab in 1472. After Farid's birth, both his grandfather and father entered the service of Jamal Khan in the Punjab. When Jamal Khan was transferred to Jaunpur in the time of Sikandar Lodi, he granted the Jagir of Sahsaram, Khawaspur and Tanda to Hassan in Bihar.

Hassan married four wives and had 8 sons. He loved his youngest wife, not the eldest, whose son Farid was. Under the circumstances, Farid and his mother had a very unhappy time. Things came to such a pass that in 1494, Farid left Sahsaram and went to Jaunpur. He worked so hard that he mastered many Arabic and Persian books such as "Gulistan", "Bostan" and "Sikandar Nama". As Farid was a brilliant boy, he caught the eye of Jamal Khan, the patron of his father.

As a result of the intervention of Jamal Khan, Farid was appointed by Hassan to manage his Jagir and this he did successfully for full 21 years. During this period, Farid acquired so much of knowledge of land and its management that he was able later on to utilize all this as Emperor of India. Farid's successful management aroused the jealousy of his step-mother and consequently he was driven away once again in 1518. Farid went straight to Ibrahim Lodi and requested him to grant the Jagir of his father to him. The Sultan refused to do so. However, as Hassan died soon after, Ibrahim Lodi gave the Jagir of Sahsaram, Khawaspur and Tanda to Farid. Farid settled down at Sahsaram.

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1. Tripathi, R.P. : *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, p. 115.

This did not end the difficulties of Farid. His step-brother challenged his right to the whole of the Jagir and sought the intervention of Mohammad Khan Sur of Chaund in Bihar. Farid refused to share the Jagir with his brother and took up service under Bahar Khan Lohani, ruler of South Bihar, with a view to strengthen his hands. He endeared himself so much to Bahar Khan that the latter gave him the title of Sher Khan. Sher Khan was appointed as tutor of Jallal Khan, the son of Bahar Khan. Later on he was made the Deputy Governor of South Bihar.

'The rise of Sher Khan was not liked by the Lohani nobles and other Afghan chiefs and consequently they all started poisoning the ears of Bahar Khan. It was given out that Sher Khan was planning to join Mahmood Lodi who was trying to revive the Afghan Empire in India. Bahar Khan asked Sher Khan to divide his Jagir and on his refusal, took forcible possession of the same and turned out Sher Khan.

When he was in this helpless condition, Sher Khan joined the Mughal service in April, 1527. When Babar attacked Bihar, Sher Khan rendered him very useful service. As a reward of his services, his Jagir was restored to him. Sher Khan spent his time in Mughal service usefully. He studied the defects in Mughal administration and Mughal military organisation. He also particularly noted the vanity of the Mughals. He left their service towards the end of 1528 as he found it difficult to pull on.<sup>1</sup>

Sher Khan once again went to South Bihar and was reappointed tutor and guardian of Jalal Khan. The ruler of South Bihar died in 1528 and Sher Khan was appointed the Deputy Governor or Wakil. In his new capacity, Sher Khan tried to overhaul the whole of the system of administration of South Bihar. He was also able to gather together a large number of followers who were prepared to risk their all for him.

Another difficulty faced Sher Khan in 1529. Mahmood Lodi came to Bihar in 1529 on the invitation of some Afghan nobles. All the Afghans came under his banner and he took into his own hands the government of South Bihar. Sher Khan did not show enthusiasm for Mahmood Lodi. He was not willing to annoy Babur. On the insistence and persuasion of Mahmood Lodi, Sher Khan also joined after some hesitation at the beginning. To begin with, the Afghans were successful, but as the fighting became bitter, Mohammad Lodi ran away from the battle-field. South Bihar was restored to Jalal Khan, and he was to pay an annual tribute as a Mughal vassal. Sher Khan was invited once again and made the Deputy Governor of Bihar under Jalal Khan. The mother of Jalal Khan died and Jalal was still a minor at that time. The result was that all the power in South Bihar fell into Sher Khan's hands.

The relations between Bengal and South Bihar were never

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1. Babur is stated to have observed thus: "This Afghan is not to be disconcerted by trifles; but may come up to be a great man yet.....Keep an eye on Sher Khan. He is the clever man, and the marks of royalty are visible on his forehead."

good on account of their conflicting interests. Nasrat Shah, ruler of Bengal, had an eye on South Bihar. Sher Khan cultivated friendly relations with the brother-in-law of Nasrat Shah and tried to use him against Nasrat Shah. Nasrat Shah had invaded South Bihar but was defeated by Sher Khan in 1529. The victory raised the prestige of Sher Khan and also aroused the jealousy of many others.

Although Sher Khan was the virtual ruler of that part of the country, he did not make any formal declaration to that effect. He took up the title of Hazrat-i-Ala. He also got the fort of Chunar by means of a marriage with a widow.

### **Sher Khan and Humayun**

After his defeat in the battle of Ghagra in 1529, Mahmood Lodi wanted to try his luck once again in 1530. He felt that time was opportune for a trial of strength. Humayun was seriously ill and later on when his life was saved, Babur died. Soon after his succession to the throne, the hands of Humayun were full and consequently he could not be expected to deal effectively with the affairs of a distant place like Bihar. Mahmood Lodi got the help of all the Afghan chiefs. He had to take special pains to enlist the support of Sher Khan. Many months were spent in preparations and the Afghans occupied the territory up to Banaras. When they marched towards Jaunpur, Humayun got upset. At that time, he was busy with his siege of Kalinjar. He hastily made peace with the Raja of that place and advanced against the Afghans. In the Battle of Dourah in U.P. in August, 1532, the Afghans were defeated and Mahmood Lodi ran away. Sher Khan was throughout an unwilling worker and soon after the failure of the Afghan attempt, he recovered South Bihar.

After his success against the Afghans, Humayun besieged the fort of Chunar<sup>1</sup> which belonged to Sher Khan. The siege lasted for 4 months and during all this period Sher Khan was able to defy the might of Humayun. However, Humayun made peace with Sher Khan as he got news of trouble in Gujarat by Bahadur Shah. Sher Khan was allowed to continue in possession of Chunar on the condition that he was to send a contingent of 500 troops for service in the Mughal army. These terms were accepted by both the parties in January 1533.

### **Sher Khan and Bengal**

When Sher Khan had his difficulties with Humayun, the ruler of Bengal had tried to create all kinds of handicaps for him. The

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1. "The fort of Chunar stands on a rock close to the Ganges, and is, as it were, a detached portion of the Vindhya Mountains which extend to the same river near Mirzapur. From that neighbourhood the hills recede westwards, by the Fort of Rohtas and Shirghari, and do not approach the river again, until near Bhagalpur, after which they run straight south, leaving the Ganges at a great distance. These hills, therefore, covered the whole of the south-west of Bihar and Bengal, and shut up the road along the south banks of the Ganges, in two places—one near Chunar and the other at Sieragalli, east of Bhagalpur. The hills themselves are not high, but poor and covered with woods."

result was that after making peace with Humayun, Sher Khan made up his mind to deal with the ruler of Bengal. In the **Battle of Surajgarh** in 1534, the ruler of Bengal was defeated. This victory was a turning point in the life of Sher Khan. According to Dr. Qanungo, "Great as it was as a military achievement, it was greater in its far-reaching political result. But for the victory at Surajgarh, the Jagirdar at Sahsaram would never have emerged from his obscurity into the arena of Hindustan politics to reign, in spite of himself, a race for the empire with hereditary crowned heads like Bahadur Shah and Humayun Badshah." Moreover, "the whole of the treasures, elephants and a train of artillery of the Bengal army fell into the hands of Sher Khan and he became master of the kingdom of Bihar and other territory."

The victory of Surajgarh added to the hunger of Sher Khan and he repeated his attacks of Bengal many a time. Every time, the ruler of Bengal was defeated and he had to pay money. At one time, the ruler of Bengal got the help of the Portuguese but even that did not help matters as Sher Khan was too clever for both of them. As a matter of fact, Sher Khan ruled Gaur and threatened the same in 1536 when the ruler of Bengal was forced to make peace.

Although peace was made in 1536, Sher Khan was determined to capture the whole of Bengal. After making adequate preparations, Sher Khan attacked Bengal once again in 1537. Finding himself absolutely unequal to the task, the ruler of Bengal appealed to Humayun for help.

Humayun too was alarmed at the activities and achievements of Sher Khan and no wonder he at once moved towards Chunar after making the necessary preparations. He reached Chunar in November, 1537 and besieged it. He took 6 long months to capture it. It was a folly on the part of Humayun to have wasted so much of energy, time and money at Chunar. He should have proceeded straight to Bengal to help its ruler. The result was that then Humayun was busy with his conquest of Chunar, Sher Khan conquered the Bengal territory between Monghyr and Gaur and besieged Gaur itself. Sher Khan also acquired the fort of Rohtasgarh in Bihar by cleverness. This fort was in the possession of a Hindu Raja. There are two views regarding the method by which this fort was captured. According to one view, Sher Khan requested the Hindu Raja of Rohtasgarh to give shelter to his women. Out of generosity, the Hindu Raja agreed. Sher Khan smuggled into the fort a large number of armed Afghan troops in covered litters. They were disguised as women. When the Afghan soldiers entered the fort, they captured the same and turned out the Hindu troops. Another view is that Sher Khan gave a bribe to the Minister of Hindu Raja and got from him a promise of shelter in the fort. The Raja protested but in spite of that the Minister allowed the Afghans to enter the fort. As soon as they entered it, they took possession of the fort. This happened in 1538.

While Humayun was busy in the siege of Chunar, Sher Khan was doing all that he could to capture Gaur as quickly as possible.

After hard efforts, Gaur was captured and occupied. The authority of Sher Khan was established in Bengal but this was destined to be short-lived.

### Mughal Occupation of Bengal

To begin with, Humayun had negotiations with Sher Khan to arrive at some amicable settlement. He asked Sher Khan to surrender all his territory and accept a small Jagir for himself. When this offer was rejected by Sher Khan, Humayun asked him to surrender Bihar and keep Bengal and pay an annual tribute of Rs. 10 lakhs for the same. Sher Khan accepted the proposal and there seemed to be an end of the matter, but later on Humayun made up his mind to conquer Bengal. Sher Khan condemned Humayun for the breach of promise. As Humayun advanced to capture Gaur, Sher Khan hurried to transfer his treasure from Gaur to Rohtasgarh. When that was done, Sher Khan allowed Humayun to go into Bengal without any let or hindrance. Humayun occupied Gaur and busied himself for many months in merry-making.

During this interval, Sher Khan was able to establish his control over the territory between Bihar and Delhi. He was also able to cut off all lines of communication between Delhi and Bengal. Humayun had foolishly wasted 8 months at Gaur in frivolities. He ought to have withdrawn from Bengal as early as possible and gone back to Agra. His long stay in Bengal and the nearing of the rainy season were in the interest of Sher Khan.

In June 1539 was fought the **Battle of Chausa** in which Humayun was defeated and he managed to escape with his life with difficulty. Before this battle was fought, Humayun had wasted a lot of time in futile negotiations and kept his troops idle for a pretty long time. Sher Khan won this battle by leading a surprise attack on the Mughals who were sleeping in their camps at midnight. The victory of Chausa was of very great importance. It brought a radical change in the life of Sher Khan. The scope of his "ambition was immensely widened." According to Dr. Quanugo, in 1538, Sher Khan would have contented himself with the position of a Mughal vassal. "Now he won, by this single stroke, Jaunpur in addition to Bengal and Bihar in independent sovereignty and could legitimately claim equality with the Emperor." After the Battle of Chausa, Sher Khan began to dream of sitting on the throne of Delhi. The victory of Chausa made Sher Khan the *de facto* ruler of Bengal and Bihar. Sher Khan declared himself as the King of Bengal and Bihar in 1539.

According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "The defeat of Chausa was due to causes which can be analysed with precision. That treachery played a great part in deciding the issue of the battle cannot be denied. Even Afghan historians admit that Sher Khan had acted in violation of his plighted faith and attacked the Mughals when they were least prepared for action. So great was the confusion caused in the army by Khawas Khan's sudden appearance that the Emperor, who was having ablutions, had

scarcely time to remove his harem to a place of safety. The officer who was guilty of culpable negligence on that fateful night was Mohammad Zaman Mirza who did not keep watch as directed and went away to sleep, leaving the Camp in an unguarded position. The imperial troops were not well-organized. The malarious climate of Bengal had sapped their strength and they did not feel the same enthusiasm for fighting as their opponents. Their arrogance too did them serious harm. They held the Afghans in contempt and underestimated the strength of Sher Khan's army. The Emperor, though a valiant soldier, was out-generalled by his antagonist. The latter's superior tactics, his organization of the army, his correct estimate of Mughal strength, his ability to command the resources of the country, and above all, his confidence in his cause secured an easy victory for him. The Afghan historian's remark that he knew well the devices and stratagems of war and that he could adapt himself to a crisis without difficulty is not wholly without justification. But to these causes of victory we must also add his utter lack of scruples. He felt no qualms of conscience in breaking his word and sanctioning arrangements which were contrary to his declared intentions. Matched against a foe of this kind, Humayun, who was used to act even in critical situations with fairness and generosity, was thrown off his guard and easily overpowered."<sup>1</sup>

After his coronation, Sher Shah sent an army to Gaur with a view to turn out the Mughal garrison. This was carried out. Humayun was pursued, but allowed to escape to Delhi.

In May 1540 was fought the **Battle of Kanauj** between Humayun and Sher Shah. Here also, Humayun repeated the same folly which was responsible for his defeat in the Battle of Chausa. For full one month, the Mughal armies did nothing. It was Sher Khan who chose his time to attack the Mughals. The Mughal artillery could not be used at all.

Mirza Haider, Babur's cousin, has given the following account of the Battle of Kanauj: "The Imperial army reached the banks of the Ganges in the best way that it could. There it encamped and lay for about a month, the Emperor being on one side of the river, and Sher Shah on the other, facing each other. The armies may have amounted to more than 200,000 men. Muhammad Sultan Mirza, who had several times revolted against Humayun, but being unsuccessful, had sought forgiveness, and had been pardoned, now having colluded with Sher Shah, deserted.

"A new way was thus opened. Everybody began to desert, and the most surprising part of it was that many of those who deserted did not go over to Sher Shah, and could expect no favour from him. A heated feeling ran through the army, and the cry was, 'Let us go and rest in our own homes.' A number also of Kamran's auxiliary forces deserted and fled to Lahore.....

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1. Ishwari Prasad: *The Life and Times of Humayun*, pp. 135-6.

"As the army had taken to desert, it was judged better to risk a battle, than to see it go to ruin without fighting. If the result was unfavourable, in that case, we could not at least be accused of having abandoned the Empire without striking a blow. We therefore crossed the river. Both armies entrenched themselves. Everyday skirmishes occurred between the adventurous swaggering spirits of both sides. These proceedings were put an end to by the monsoon rains, which came on and flooded the ground rendering it unfit for camp. To move was indispensable. Opinions were expressed that another such a deluge would sink the whole army in the abyss of despair, and it was decided to move to a rising ground, which the inundation could not reach, and which lay in front of the enemy. I went to reconnoitre, and found a place suitable for the purpose.....

"Between me and the river there was a force of 27 Amirs, all whom carried *tugh* banner.....On the day of battle, when Sher Shah, having formed his divisions, marched out, of all these 27 *tugh* banners, not one was to be seen, for the great nobles had hidden them, in the apprehension that the enemy might advance towards them. The soldiership and bravery of these Amirs may be conceived from this exhibition of courage. Sher Shah came out in five divisions of 1000 men each, and in advance of him were 3,000 men. I estimated the whole as being less than 15,000, but I calculated the Chaghatai force as about 40,000 all mounted on tipchak horses, and clad in iron armour. They surged like the wave of the sea, but the courage of the Amirs and officers of the army was such as I have described.

"Every Amir and Wazir in the Chaghatai army, whether he be rich or poor, has his *ghulams*. An Amir of note with his 100 retainers and followers has 500 servants and *ghulams* who on the day of battle render no assistance to their master and have no control over themselves. So in whatsoever place there was conflict, the *ghulams* were entirely ungovernable. When they lost their master, they were seized with panic, and blindly rushed about in terror. In short, it was impossible to hold our ground. They so pressed upon us in the rear that they drove the centre upon the chains stretched between the gun-carriages, and they and the soldiers dashed each other upon them. Such was the state of the centre.

"On the right, Sher Shah advanced in battle array ; but before an arrow was discharged, the camp-followers fled like chaff before the wind, and breaking the line, they all pressed towards the centre.

"The Chaghatais were defeated in this battle-field where not a man, either friend or foe, was wounded ; not a gun was fired ; and the chariots were useless. The Emperor fled to Agra ; and when the enemy approached that city, he made no delay but went to Lahore."

According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "The Battle of the Ganges turned out a greater disaster than the rout of Chausa and shattered for the time being, at any rate, the hopes of a Mughal revival. It appears from Mirza Haider's account of the conference among the brothers which preceded the campaign, that to discerning eyes the

issue of the battle was a foregone conclusion. Abul Fazl's remarks also convey the impression that Humayun did not feel sure of victory in this campaign. Lack of unity among the brothers marred the enterprise from the very outset and Kamran's intransigence must have greatly encouraged the hopes of Sher Shah. Humayun's choice of the river line was a blunder. He ought to have remained on the western side of the stream and ought not to have crossed it, for by doing so he did not only put his troops in peril but placed himself deliberately in a position in which a defeat was bound to prove disastrous to him. Having made the mistake of crossing the river, the camping ground was not judiciously chosen, and the transfer to an elevated spot in the midst of a heavy rain drenched the baggage which became too heavy to carry and disorganised the army. Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad rightly observes that the heavy rain was the chief cause of the defeat of imperial army. The Afghans chose their minute well and began their attack while the Mughals were still removing their baggage to the new camping ground.

"The contrast between the discipline and efficiency of the two armies explains the defeat of the Mughals. The Afghans had rallied under a national banner and the example and courage of their leader filled them with determination and hope. Humayun, who had bravely maintained himself in the thick of the fight at Panipat and Kanauj, had deteriorated and most of Babur's generals had either died in the natural course or left for their homes. The climate of India must have told on the health of the troops, and the soft life of Bengal must have enervated them to a considerable extent. The improvised levies that had been hastily collected in eastern country were no match to the sturdy Afghans who were well-drilled and disciplined for the arduous duties of the battle-field."

The army of Sher Khan pursued Humayun who had some rest at Lahore but was made to vacate the same. Kamran was not prepared to risk a conflict with Sher Shah. He felt that he might be able to keep his possessions by being considerate towards him.

Sher Khan received the submission of the Baloch chiefs. He also undertook an expedition for the conquest of the Gakkhar country lying between the upper courses of the Jhelum and the Indus.

### **Conquest of Malwa (1542)**

Sher Shah attacked Malwa in 1542. Its conquest was necessary for the integrity and safety of the kingdom. Sher Shah sent an expedition to Malwa. The Governor of the fort of Gwalior submitted.

### **Conquest of Raisin (1543)**

Raisin was in Central India. In 1542, Pooran Mal waited on Sher Shah and he was given many gifts by the king. Sher Shah wanted to have for himself the fort of Raisin. He also came to know that Pooran Mal was trying to subjugate the Muslims and enslave their women. Sher Shah wanted to teach him a lesson. He went to Raisin via Mandu and besieged the same. The fort was

captured by a clever device. A large number of Hindu men and women were killed. Pooran Mal and his followers fought "like hogs at bay."

Sher Shah has rightly been condemned for the manner in which he behaved towards Pooran Mal and his family. The latter surrendered the fort on the express promise of safe conduct. In spite of that, he and his followers were attacked unawares. A daughter of Pooran Mal and three sons of his brother were captured alive and the rest were put to the sword. The girl was given to itinerant minstrels (*Bazigaran*) that they might make her dance in the bazars. The boys were ordered to be castrated so that the race may be destroyed. In the words of Ishwari Prasad, "Such was the inhuman barbarity of Sher Shah towards an enemy who had relied upon plighted faith..."

### **Conquest of Multan and Sind**

Sher Shah conquered Multan and Sind and occupied the Punjab which was vacated by Kamran.

### **War with Jodhpur**

Maldeo, the ruler of Jodhpur, invited Humayun in June 1541 to recover the throne of Delhi. Sher Shah wrote to Maldeo asking him not to give shelter to Humayun and arrest him and hand him over to him. Under the circumstances, Maldeo remained neutral for fear of offending Sher Shah or Humayun. In spite of all this, Sher Shah was not satisfied with the behaviour of Maldeo and wanted to teach him a lesson. Moreover, Sher Shah could not tolerate the existence of a powerful state like that of Maldeo. Preparations were made for an attack on Maldeo. Towards the end of 1543, Sher Shah marched against Marwar. He did not get an easy victory. He had to resort to a clever device to defeat Maldeo. Dissensions were created between Maldeo and his followers and it was then that Maldeo was defeated. The forged letters were to the following effect. "Let not the king permit any anxiety or doubt to find its way to his heart. During the battle, we will seize Maldeo and bring him to you." So bitter was the fighting and so difficult was the victory that Sher Shah declared thus: "I had nearly lost the Empire of Hindustan for a handful of *Bajra* (Millet)."

Marwar was got in 1544 but soon after the death of Sher Shah Maldeo reoccupied the lost territory in July 1555.

As regards the policy of Sher Shah towards the Rajput princes, Dr. Qanungo observes: "In Rajasthan, Sher Shah made no attempt to uproot the local chiefs or to reduce them to thorough subjection as he had done in other parts of Hindustan. He considered the task dangerous as well as fruitless. He did not aim at the complete subversion of their independence, but their political and geographical isolation from one another so as to make any general upheaval against the Empire impossible. In short, it was something like a British occupation in the North-Western Frontier tribal territories which is meant less for gain than for the safety of the Indian Empire." Sher Shah established garrisons of his troops at important places and maintained strict control over the means of communication.

Ajmer, Chittor, Jodhpur and Mount Abu were fortified and held by Afghan troops.

Sher Shah led his last expedition against the Raja of Kalinjar in Bundelkhand. It was felt that it was difficult to capture the fort even after a siege lasting for a year. Ultimately, Sher Shah decided to blow up the walls of the fort. Mines were dug. Sher Shah was injured by the explosion of gunpowder. The fort was taken but Sher Shah himself died in May 1545.

### **Sher Shah's Administration<sup>1</sup>**

There has been a lot of controversy with regard to the real nature of the system of administration of Sher Shah Sur. To begin with, it was maintained that Sher Shah was merely a soldier who possessed an average administrative capacity. Dr. K. R. Qanungo put forward a new thesis. According to him, Sher Shah was a greater constructive genius than Akbar himself. According to Dr. Tripathi and Dr. Saran, Sher Shah was merely a reformer and not an innovator. According to them, too much importance has been given to his achievements than is really due to them. It is pointed out that in many ways, he merely revived the system of Ala-ud-Din Khilji. Otherwise, there was nothing original in what he did.

Sher Shah's administration was not only autocratic but also enlightened and vigorous. He did not listen to the advice of the Ulema. He aimed at the betterment of administration and looked into the smaller details of administration.

Sher Shah was a benevolent despot. He had both civil and military powers in his hands and he exercised them in the interests of the people rather than for himself.

Sher Shah was helped by four Ministers and those were the Diwan-i-Wizarat, Diwan-i-Ariz, Diwan-i-Rasalat and Diwan-i-Insha. The Wazir was the head of the Diwan-i-Wizarat. He was in charge of both the income and expenditure of the country. He also exercised a general supervision over other ministers. The Diwan-i-Ariz was under Arizi-i-Mamalik. The latter was in charge of the recruitment, organization and discipline of the army. He was responsible for the payment of salaries of the army. On account of his personal interest in the military affairs, Sher Shah interfered a lot in this department. The Diwan-i-Rasalat was under a foreign minister. His duty was to keep himself in touch with the ambassadors and envoys. He also dealt with diplomatic correspondence. The work of charity and endowment was also in his hands. The Minister-in-charge of Diwan-i-Insha had to draft royal proclamations and dispatches. He was in charge of Government records. His duty was also to correspond with the Governors and other local officers.

1. According to Sher Shah, "The essence of royal protection consists in protecting the life and property of the subjects. They should use the principles of justice and equality in all their dealings with all classes of peoples, and instruct powerful officers so that they may try their best to refrain from cruelty and oppression in their jurisdiction."

In addition to the four departments or Ministers, there were also the Diwan-i-Qaza and Diwan-i-Barid. The first was under the Chief Qazi. The duty of the Chief Qazi was to supervise the administration of Justice. Diwan-i-Barid was the Intelligence Department of the Government. It had a large number of newswriters and spies who were scattered all over the country. There was also a high official in charge of the royal household. He enjoyed a lot of prestige on account of his nearness to the royal family. He may be called the Lord High Steward.

There are two theories with regard to provincial administration under Sher Shah. According to Dr. Qanungo, the highest division of the country was Sarkar and the provinces were the creation of Akbar, the Great. According to Dr. Saran, provinces existed even before Akbar and it is wrong to say that Sarkar was the highest division for purposes of Administration. However, both the views do not seem to be quite correct. It cannot be denied that there were administrative divisions which corresponded to provinces. There was no uniformity with regard to their income and size. They were known as Iqtas and were assigned to chiefs. Sher Shah established a new type of Provincial administration in Bengal. The latter was divided into a number of Sarkars. A civilian was to be at the head of the entire province and he was given a small army for his help. His duty was to keep supervision over the various officials of the Sarkar and also settle the disputes. The details of provincial administration are not clear and it is not possible to say how its officers were appointed and what their names were.

### **Sarkar**

In the time of Sher Shah, provinces were divided into Sarkars. The two important officials of a Sarkar were Munsif-i-Munsifan or Munsif-in-Chief and Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran or Shiqdar-in-Chief. The Munsif-i-Munsifan was primarily a judge and tried civil cases. He also supervised the work of Amins. As regards the Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran, his duty was to maintain law and order within the Sarkar or district and also to put down those who dared to revolt. He was also to supervise the work of the Shiqdars of the Parganas.

### **Parganas**

If there were many Sarkars in a province, there were many Parganas in a Sarkar. The important officials in a Pargana were a Shiqdar, an Amin, a treasurer, a Munsif, a Hindi writer and a Persian writer for accounts. In addition to these, there were the Patwari, Chaudhari and the Muqaddam who acted as intermediaries between the people and the Government. Shiqdar maintained soldiers who were employed for maintaining peace and rounding up the unsocial elements. He assisted in the collection of royal dues and even employed force if that was necessary. He presided over the local common law courts dealing with criminal cases. He can be compared to the modern Deputy Collector. The Amin supervised the land revenue administration and collection of government dues. The entire staff of the land revenue department in the

Pargana was under his control. He tried civil and revenue cases. The Amin enjoyed the same status as the Shiqdar. The Fotahdar was the treasurer of the Pargana. All collections of the Pargana were deposited with him. He maintained account of the income and expenditure of the Pargana. The clerks of the Pargana were known as Karkuns. One of the clerks maintained all records in Persian. Another clerk maintained duplicate records in Hindi for the convenience of the public. Sher Shah transferred Amins and Shiqdars every two years or even earlier so that there was no possibility of any local rebellion. Sher Shah did not interfere with the work of the Pargana officials. He merely tried to maintain contact with them through the Patwaris and the Chowkidars. Villagers were allowed to work with the help of their Panchayats.

### Sher Shah's Army

The importance of the army to Sher Shah cannot be over-emphasized. It was only with the help of the army that he was able to drive out Humayun and subdue practically the whole of Northern India. He invited Afghan soldiers from every part of the country and gave them the highest posts in the army. He took great personal interest in the recruitment of the troops. In many cases, he himself fixed the emoluments of the soldiers. Troops were promoted on the basis of merit and no wonder Shere Shah's armies became very strong.

Sher Shah re-introduced the system of **Dagh** or branding of horses and **Chera** or the preparation of the descriptive rolls of the soldiers. In this way, fraudulent musters were checked.

Sher Shah put a lot of emphasis on the cavalry. His infantry was armed with muskets and the troops were skilful in their use.

Sher Shah also divided his army into many divisions and each division was to be under a commander. Strict supervision was maintained on the discipline of the soldiers. Transport and commissariat arrangements were to be made by the soldiers themselves. Provisions were supplied to the soldiers by the Banjaras who moved about along with the army.

Critics point out certain defects in Sher Shah's army. The Afghan contingents often consisted of members of a single clan or tribe. The result was that their natural loyalty was to the tribal leaders rather than to the sovereign. This fact is proved by the revolts of Khawas Khan and Habit Khan against Islam Shah. The provincial contingents were not under the control of the centre.

### Finance

Sher Shah did all that he could to add to his resources. Some of the money came from Central revenues and the other from the local revenues. Heirless property came to the Government. **Jizya** also brought a lot of money. Commerce, mint, presents, salt, customs, Khams and land revenue were other sources of income. All nobles were required to make presents to the king. However, the main source of income was the land revenue.

## Revenue Administration

Before the time of Sher Shah, land was not measured and the share of the Government was a rough estimate. It goes to the credit of Sher Shah that he ordered an accurate survey of all the land in the empire. The share of the Government was fixed at one-third of the expected produce. The payment could be made to the Government either in cash or in kind. The money was realised with the help of Muqadams and they got a percentage for their services. In certain cases, the peasants were allowed to make the payment directly to the treasury. It is possible that three systems of assessment prevailed in the time of Sher Shah. Those were : (1) Ghalla-Bakshi or Batia, (2) Nasq or Muktai or Kankut, (3) Naqdi or Zabti or Jamai. Batai was of three kinds viz., Khet-Batai, Lank-Batai and Rasi-Batai.

Sher Shah gave instructions that leniency was to be shown at the time of assessment, but not at the time of collection of revenue. The obvious object of this order was to check corruption among the officials. Sher Shah had also passed orders that while the army was on the move, it was not to destroy the crops of the peasants. If any damage was done to the crops, the Government was to pay compensation.

The great merit of the reforms of Sher Shah in the field of revenue administration was that he introduced a permanent schedule of rates and also defined the mutual rights and obligations of the peasants of the State through Patta and Qabuliyat. He adopted measurements as the normal measures of assessment and adjusted the interests of all the parties concerned in a harmonious manner. His guiding motto was justice to all.

Reference may be made to some of the defects of the revenue system. The share of the Government was fixed at one-third of the average produce of the three kinds of land, viz. good, middling and bad. The result was that the bad land was over-charged and the good land was under-charged. It is possible that this inequality might have adjusted itself "by variations in the crops grown." Moreover, the share of the Government was rather high. As the settlement was made for one year only, a lot of inconvenience must have been caused to the cultivators. The corruption among the officials of the Revenue Department must have added to the troubles of the people. The Jagirdari system was also another defect in the system.

According to Dr. Tripathi, Sher Shah's system of revenue assessment suffered from two defects. In the first place, the cultivators of the middling and bad lands had to pay proportionately less. Secondly, the settlement of the cash value of the share of the Government depended on correct information, proper enquiry and prompt report to and instruction from the Central Government. Such a procedure was dilatory and not quite dependable. It was likely to hold up the work of collection and thereby cause great inconvenience, annoyance and disadvantage to the revenue collectors and cultivators.

According to Moreland, "The historical importance of Sher Shah's methods lies in the fact that they formed the starting point of the series of experiments in administration which marked the first half of Akbar's reign."<sup>1</sup>

### Justice

Sher Shah is very famous for giving justice to all concerned. No person could escape punishment on account of his status. The courts presided over by the Qazi and Mir Adl tried civil cases. The Hindus settled their disputes in their Panchayats. However, in criminal cases, everybody was subject to the law of the state. The criminal law of that time was very harsh and punishments were severe. The object of punishment was not to reform the criminal but to set an example, so that the others may not do the same. Sher Shah gave severe punishments in the case of Government officials and other persons of high status. There is a story regarding the high standard of justice given by Sher Shah. One of his nephews threw a betel leaf at the wife of a goldsmith who was taking her bath at the enclosure of her house. The matter was brought to the notice of Sher Shah and he ordered that the wife of his nephew should be asked to start her bath in the same way and the goldsmith be allowed to throw a betel leaf at her. In another case, the Governor of Malwa, Shujaat Khan, withheld a part of the Jagirs of 2,000 soldiers. Although Shujaat Khan restored the Jagirs, he was punished by the Emperor. So great was the reputation of Sher Shah as a just ruler that a merchant could travel and sleep in the desert without fear of being robbed.

### Police

The functions of the police were performed by the soldiers in the time of Sher Shah. It was the duty of the Shiqdar-i-Shiq-daran to maintain peace and order in the Sarkar. A similar position was occupied by the Shiqdar in a Pargana. It was the duty of these officials to keep a strict watch over the thieves and robbers. Sher Shah also introduced the system of local responsibility. The result was that it was the duty of the officials in-charge of the various areas to find out the culprit in every case. If there was a murder and the murderer could not be traced, the official concerned was to be hanged. The work may not have been very difficult because the officials were fully acquainted with the bad characters of the locality. The police system of Sher Shah has been praised by many historians. According to Abbas Sarwani, "Travellers and way-farers during the time of Sher Shah's reign were relieved from the trouble of keeping watch, nor did they fear to be robbed in the midst of a desert. They encamped at night at every place, desert or inhabited, without any fear; they placed their goods and property on the plain and turned out their mules to graze and they slept with minds at ease and free from care as if in their own houses, and the Zamindars for fear any mischief should occur to the travellers and that they should suffer to be arrested on account of it, kept watch over them. And in the time of Sher Shah's rule a decrepit old woman might place a basket full of

1. *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 458.

gold ornaments on her head and go on a journey and no thief or robber would come near her, for fear of punishment which Sher Shah inflicted."

### Currency

The currency system at the time of his accession to the throne was in a hopeless condition. Debasement of the coins was common. There was no fixed ratio between the coins of the various metals. Coins of various Governments were allowed to circulate at the same time and they created a lot of confusion. Sher Shah introduced a new coin called Dam. He also abolished the old and mixed metal currency. The names on the coins were given in Devanagari script. Gold coins were also introduced. The ratio of exchange between the Dam and rupee was 64 to 1.

### Trade

Sher Shah abolished the various duties which were levied at the frontiers of every province. The object was to facilitate trade in the country. Only two duties were allowed. The first duty was levied when the goods were brought into the country and the second was levied when the goods were sold. All internal customs were abolished.

### Means of Communications

Sher Shah Sur was a great road-maker. He built four big roads. The first road was from Sonargaon in Bengal to the Indus. This was known as the Sarak-i-Azam and was 1,500 *Kos* in length. It can be identified with the present Grand Trunk Road. The second road ran from Agra to Burhanpur. The third road ran from Agra to Jodhpur and Chittor. The fourth road was from Lahore to Multan. Trees were planted on both sides of the roads. Sarais were built at a distance of every *Kroh*. Separate provision was made for Hindus and Muslims in these Sarais. There was also a well, a mosque and officials such as an Imam, a Muazzin, etc. According to Dr. Qanungo, the Sarais became "the veritable arteries of the Empire, diffusing a new life among its hitherto benumbed limbs." Market-towns developed near these Sarais and trade improved.

### Charity

Sher Shah was very liberal in the matter of making grants. He gave grants to Imams and holy men. He also patronized art and letters. Under the orders of Sher Shah, the old grants were scrutinized. He ordered Munshies to prepare the Firmans. He examined them and sealed them himself and sent them to the Shiqdars for distribution. Every effort was made to give grants to those who deserved it. Special grants were given to Madrasas and mosques. Stipends were given to teachers and students. Free kitchens were established by the Government. It is to be noted that in the matter of making grants, Sher Shah was very liberal towards the Afghans.

### Education

Sher Shah did not interfere with the education of the Hindus.

The latter were allowed to arrange for the education of their children in their own way. Some of the religious institutions of the Hindus were given grants in aid. So far as the Muslims were concerned, a Maktab was attached to every mosque for imparting elementary education and teaching Persian and Arabic. Madrasas were set up for higher education. Endowments were given to new ones and the old ones were given grants-in-aid by the Government. Scholarships were also given by the State on merit.

### **Intelligence Department**

The Sarais were also used as Dak Chaukis. A Daroga-i-Dak Chauki was appointed by Sher Shah. A large number of news-writers and news-carriers were employed and the king got daily reports regarding what was happening in various parts of the country. The system worked so efficiently that Sher Shah was able to get information from all parts of his dominion.

### **Religious Policy**

There is a difference of opinion regarding the religious policy followed by Sher Shah. According to Dr. Qanungo, Sher Shah followed a policy of religious toleration towards the Hindus. His attitude was "not contemptuous sufferance but respectful deference." Principal Sri Ram Sharma differs from Qanungo. Sher Shah was very much devoted to his own faith. He did his prayers five times a day. On more than one occasion, Sher Shah resorted to *Jehad* or holy war against the Rajputs. War against Pooranmal of Raisin was officially called a *Jehad*. His treatment of Maldeo of Jodhpur is a symbol of his intolerance. The same could be said about the siege of Kalinjar. Generally, Sher Shah was tolerant in matters of religious belief. He separated politics from ethics. He did not carry on any organized propaganda against the Hindus. On the whole, he was tolerant towards the Hindus.

According to Dr. A. L. Srivastava, "The net result of Sher Shah's policy was that his Muslim subjects never felt angry with him on account of his liberal and lenient policy towards the Hindus. On the other hand, Akbar, in his anxiety to please his Hindu subjects, ignored the sentiments of his Muslim subjects. Its result was that he (Akbar) no doubt was successful in pleasing the Hindus, but he lost the sympathy of his Muslim subjects and, as such, became an obstacle in uniting the two communities into one. Sher Shah's policy was that Islam should be given its due dignity and supremacy in this land but, at the same time, Hinduism also should not be held inferior nor should it be degraded. In those days, therefore, this attitude and policy was more useful and appropriate, according to which he (Sher Shah) could openly favour the Hindus without displeasing the Muslims as well. If Akbar and his successors had pursued this policy of 'religious neutrality' in the country, this complicated communal problem of India would have found a correct solution very long ago."

### **Buildings**

A regards the buildings of Sher Shah, he was responsible for

the construction of Rohtasgarh on the Jhelum. The Purana Qila of New Delhi is said to have been constructed by him. According to Fergusson, the Purana Qila is the most perfect of Sher Shah's buildings. According to V.A. Smith, "The short-lived and unstable Sur dynasty of which Sher Shah was the most distinguished member, had such a hard fight for existence that it could not have been expected to pay much attention to architecture. Nevertheless, several meritorious buildings are due to the Sur dynasty and the Mausoleum of Sher Shah at Sahsaram built on a lofty plinth in the midst of a lake, is one of the best designed and most beautiful buildings in India unequalled among the early buildings in the Northern Provinces for grandeur and dignity. Cunningham was half inclined to prefer it to even Taj—the style may be described as intermediate between the austerity of the Tughlaq buildings and the feminine grace of Shah Jahan's masterpiece."

The Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi has given the following account] of daily routine of Sher Shah: "Sher Shah was occupied night and day with the business of his kingdom, and never allowed himself to be idle. At the end of night, he arose, performed his ablutions and said his prayers. Afterwards he called in his officers and managers to report all the occurrences of the day. Four hours he listened to the reading of reports of the affairs of the country or on business of the Government establishments. The orders which he gave were reduced to writing and were issued and acted upon, there was no need of further discussion. Thus he remained engaged till morning arrived. When it was time for prayers, he performed his devotions in a large congregation and went through all the forms of prayer. Afterwards he received his nobles and soldiers, and made inquiries as to the horses brought to receive their brands. Then he went out and made a personal inspection of his forces, and settled the allowances of each individual by word of mouth until all was arranged. He then attended to many other affairs and audited accounts. Petitions were received from every quarter, and replies were sent: he himself dictated them in Persian, and the scribes committed them to writing. Every person who came to wait upon him was received in the palace."

### **Estimate of Sher Shah**

Sher Shah was a great empire-builder. By sheer dint of hard work, he rose to the position of the Emperor of Northern India. He possessed an iron determination. He was shrewd and diplomatic in his actions. He could at once grasp the situation and take full advantage of the same. He was pious in his life and was responsible for restoring the wives of Humayun after their capture at Chausa. He was not a very cultured man but he possessed enough knowledge of Arabic and Persian. He was not a soldier by profession but certainly he understood how to plan campaigns to a successful conclusion. He took full advantage of the follies of Humayun and drove him out of the country. He is stated to have observed thus: "If fortune favours me, I can drive these Mughals back out of Hindustan; they are not our superiors in war, but we

let slip the power that we had by reason of our dissensions. Since I had been among the Mughals, I have observed their conduct and found them lacking in order and discipline, while those who profess to lead them, in the pride of birth and rank, neglect the duty of supervision, and leave everything to officials whom they blindly trust. These subordinates act corruptly in every case.....they are led by lust of gain, and make no distinction between soldier and civilian, foe or friend."

He was a successful statesman. He kept the good of the people in his heart and tried to do all that he could for the welfare of the people. He tried to give peace and justice to the people. He laid down the foundations of an administrative system which was developed by Akbar later on. He has been rightly called a **fore-runner of Akbar**. He anticipated him in many ways. His revenue reforms were on the same lines as those of Akbar later on. He tried to improve the military system. However, Akbar's Mansabdari system was something new.

Sher Shah was a striking personality in the history of mediaeval India. His military character was marked by a "rare combination of caution and enterprise."

Dr. Ishwari Prasad observes, "From a petty Jagirdar's son in Bihar, he had risen to the position of Emperor and had brought large and extensive territories under his sway. He had driven the Mughals out of India and humbled the pride of the noblest Mughals. He had built up an immense army which was the terror of his contemporaries. The institutions which he devised for the better governance of the country and the unremitting industry with which he looked after the business of the state had won him the admiration and esteem of friends and foes alike. By sheer force of genius, he had organized the Afghans into a nation and curbed their separatist tendencies. But he did not seem to be satisfied with his achievements and the Afghan historians mention four dying regrets : (1) to depopulate the country of Roh and to transfer the inhabitants to the tract between the Nilab and Lahore so as to avert the danger from the Mughals ; (2) to destroy Lahore which was on the road of the invader where he could easily collect supplies and organize his resources ; (3) to build two fleets of fifty large vessels each as commodious as Serais for the convenience of pilgrims going to and coming from Mecca : and (4) to raise a tomb to Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat on the condition that there should be a sepulchre of the Chaghatais whom he may have despatched to martyrdom."<sup>1</sup>

Havell says, "Sher Shah showed brilliant capacity as an organiser, both in military and civil affairs. By dint of indefatigable industry and personal attention to the smallest details of administration, he restored law and order throughout Hindustan in the short space of five years. And no doubt the long-suffering, law-abiding rayat was grateful to the iron-handed Afghan for an interval of

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1. Ishwari Prasad : *Life and Times of Humayun*, pp. 179-180.

comparative peace, and for protection against indiscriminate plunder, though he might sometimes sigh for the golden days when even Sudras were Aryan free-men, and the laws of the Village Assemblies were respected even by the King of kings and Supreme Lord of the Five Indies."

According to William Erskine, "He rose to the throne by his own talents, and showed himself worthy of the high elevation which he attained. In intelligence, in sound sense and experience, in his civil and financial arrangements, and in military skill, he is acknowledged to have been by far the most eminent of his nation, who ever ruled India...Sher Shah had more of the spirit of the legislator and guardian of the people than any prince before Akbar."

Keene observes: "His brief career was devoted to the establishment of the unity which he had long ago perceived to be the great need of his country. Though a devout Muslim, he never oppressed his Hindu subjects. His progresses were the cause of good to his people instead of being—as is too often the case in India—the occasions of devastation...It is a welcome task to take note of such things as a break in the long annals of rapine and slaughter, and we can do so without hesitation; for the acts of Sher Shah are attested by his enemies, writing when he was dead, and when his dynasty had passed away for ever." Again, "No Government—not even the British, has shown so much wisdom as this Pathan."

According to V.A. Smith, "Sher Shah was something more than the capable leader of a horde of fierce Afghans. He had a nice taste in architecture, manifested especially in the noble mausoleum at Sasseram (Sahsaram) in Bihar which he prepared for himself.....He also displayed an aptitude for civil government and instituted reforms, which were based to some extent on the institutions of Ala-ud-Din Khalji and were developed by Akbar.....He reformed the coinage, issuing an abundance of silver money, excellent in both fineness and execution. That is a good record for a stormy reign of five years. If Sher Shah had been spared, he would have established his dynasty, and the 'Great Moghals' would not have appeared on the stage of history."

The view of S.R. Sharma is: "Although, like Babur, Sher Shah sat on the throne of Delhi only for five years, he left behind him more than a mere territorial legacy. In the first place, he tried to unify and integrate the scattered provinces by creating a machinery of government in which all power would be vested in himself at the centre. Thereby a paramountcy was superimposed upon the loose federation of Afghan Tribal policy and the ground was prepared for greater centralisation under Akbar. Secondly, he attempted to standardise the entire administration of the country and to impart to it a political unity by the establishment, all over Hindustan, of a network of roads and Serais, the routine transfer of officials from one province to another, the construction of new fortress at strategic point equipped in a manner prescribed by the central authority, and the regular

collection of revenue according to rules based on principles more rational than those that obtained under the arbitrary Government of the earlier Sultans. More than anything else, Sher Shah tried to bridge the gulf between his Muslim and non-Muslim subjects by providing equal amenities for all travellers at the Serais, by the employment of Hindus in the administration to a larger extent than ever before, by fostering the peasantry which formed the backbone of the country and by his sense of justice. Nevertheless he failed to reach the height to which Zain-ul-Abidin and Akbar rose because he did not abolish the *Jizya* which was the canonical mark of discrimination in a Muslim state. Sher Shah's polity, therefore, just fell short of attempting complete national unity, the retention of that mediaeval criterion showed that Sher Shah was the last, though also the best of the mediaeval Sultans, rather than the first of the modern Emperors of India. This latter distinction belongs to Akbar alone."

Sir Wolseley Haig says : "Sher Shah has received scant justice at the hands of some historians of India who have relied largely on the records left by the court annalists of the Mughal Empire, to whom he was no more than Sher Khan, the Afghan rebel. **He was, in truth, one of the greatest rulers who ever sat upon the throne of Delhi.** No other, from Aibak to Aurangzeb, possessed such intimate knowledge of the details of administration, or was able to examine and control public business so minutely and effectively as he. He restrained the turbulence and quelled the tribal jealousies of the Afghan chiefs, he reformed the land revenue administration, he introduced a system of great trunk roads, furnished with caravan serais, wells and every convenience for the comfort and safety of the travellers, and he maintained throughout his dominions such order that 'none dared to turn the eye of dishonesty upon another's goods. An old woman with a pot of gold might securely lay herself down to rest besides her burden, even in the desert, and a cripple was not afraid of a Rustam.' Himself a pious Muslim, he suffered none to be persecuted in the name of religion, and, far wiser than Akbar, made no attempt to assume spiritual power but left each to seek God after his own fashion. Budauni, the orthodox Muslim historian, thanks God that he was born in the reign of so just a king. Of his wise and judicious measures of administration many were adopted or imitated by Akbar without acknowledgement and he was far more successful than any who followed him in checking corruption, speculation and frauds on the public treasury. 'It behoves the great', he said, 'to be always active', and throughout his life he allowed himself no more rest than was necessary for his health and the preservation of his bodily and mental powers. 'All this', says Mr. Keene, 'has an importance beyond the immediate time. After the Mughal restoration, Sher Shah's officials passed into Akbar's service ; the faults imputed by the Shah to what he called Mughal administration—but which are common to all Turks—were prevented ; and this far-sighted man, even after his death and the subversion of his dynasty, remained the originator of all that was done by mediaeval Indian rulers for the good of the people.'"<sup>1</sup>

1. *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, pp. 261-62.

According to Dr. Tripathi, if Sher Shah had lived longer, he might have taken the wind out of Akbar's sails. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest seatesmen among the Sultans of Delhi. He paved the way for the highly enlightened policy of Akbar. He was the true precursor of Akbar. Dr. Tripathi quotes with approval the view of Crookes that "...he (Sher Shah) introduced such extensive reforms in his short reign of five years is a wonderful proof of his executive ability." Dr. Tripathi rightly says that Sher Shah was undoubtedly the builder of the second Afghan Empire. At least during the lifetime, he united the Afghan tribes into a nation and recovered for them their lost empire. However, he did nothing positive which could create enthusiasm among or inspire his non-Muslim subjects to honour him as their ruler or consider him the symbol of national unity in the wider sense of the term."<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes, an effort has been made to give too much of praise to Sher Shah. It is stated that "Sher Shah may justly dispute with Akbar the claim of being the first who attempted to build up an Indian nation by reconciling the followers of the rival creeds." Unfortunately, there is nothing to substantiate such a view. As a matter of fact, Sher Shah had no clear concept of a nation. He never dreamt of founding an Indian nation. There was no such thing as national patriotism which guided his actions. His reforms were guided by expediency. Sir Wolseley Haig was not right when he said that Sher Shah was the greatest of the Muslim rulers of India. As a matter of fact, that place is occupied by Akbar and none else. Even Dr. Qanungo admits that Akbar "is justly entitled to a higher place in history than Sher Shah."

### Successors of Sher Shah

When Sher Shah died in 1545, he left two sons, Adil and Jalal. The former was the elder of the two. Both the sons were away at the time of Sher Shah's death but Jalal was the first to reach and consequently was made king by the nobles. Adil was superseded. Jalal took up the title of Islam Shah or Salim Shah and ruled up to 1553.

### Islam Shah (1545-53)

The first act of the new king was to distribute among the army two months' pay in cash. All the Jagirs were resumed by the king and their holders were given cash. The Raja of Kalinjar was put to death. Islam Shah built a Serai at every half *Kos* between the Serais of his father. He stationed in each of those Serais two horses and some footmen to bring news every day from Bengal. Poor travellers were given all kinds of comforts. Provision was made for giving of alms in those Serais. No distinction was made between Hindus and Muslims. Regulations were issued for the guidance of civil and military officials and they were required to follow them strictly. He maintained strict discipline in the army which was thoroughly reorganised and made efficient. Lands were granted for the mainte-

1. Tripathi, R. P. : *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, pp. 140-41.

nance of troops. He gave promotions to his six hundred horsemen who had served him when he was a prince. He set up an elaborate system of espionage throughout the length and breadth of the country. The result was that he received detailed reports regarding the happenings in various parts of the country. He took prompt action against the guilty and his orders were carried out in the same spirit. He set up permanent camps in the country and stationed troops in them. The camps were the centres from which royal influence radiated. On Fridays, justice was given to all the petitioners.

It is true that Islam Shah had ability and energy but he was suspicious by nature. He could not win over the affection of the nobles who virtually worshipped his father. The result was that one by one, many Afghan nobles who were responsible for the success of Sher Shah, were disposed of and thus a beginning was made in that process which ultimately led to the downfall of the second Afghan Empire.

Adil Khan, Islam's brother, paid a visit to the royal court and no harm was done to him as nobles like Khawas Khan, one of the lieutenants of Sher Shah, had given Adil a guarantee that no harm would be done to him. Adil was given a Jagir but he was hardly in possession of that Jagir for two months when orders were issued for his arrest. Khawas Khan protested but all was of no avail. Adil was arrested. This was one of the causes of the revolt of Khawas Khan and other nobles.

A conspiracy was hatched against Islam Shah and preparations were made in secret. There was a revolt in which Adil and many other Afghan nobles took part. The revolt was a failure as some of the details were miscarried. Khawas Khan was defeated. He ran away and spent the rest of his life as a rebel. Adil also disappeared for ever. Islam Shah punished all those who were suspected to have any hand in the conspiracy. According to Badauni, "Setting himself to slay and eradicate a party who were favourable to Adil Shah, he girded up his loins in enmity against them, and swept them one by one from the board of the world, like so many pieces in the game of draughts or chess." Qutab Khan, Jalal Khan Sur, Zain Khan Niazi and many others were thrown into prison where they met their death in one form or the other.

Islam Shah systematically destroyed all the Afghan nobles who occupied positions of authority and prestige. Shujaat Khan had been put in charge of Malwa by Sher Shah in recognition of his services. The grievance of Islam Shah against him was that he was rich and powerful and successful in maintaining law and order. However, Shujaat Khan was a shrewd man and was able to ward off the danger by humble representations of loyalty and devotion to the king.

Haibat Khan Niazi Azim Humayun, the Governor of the Punjab, was also not trusted by Islam Shah. He did not take pains to remove the suspicion from the mind of the king and the result was that he had to revolt. He was joined by Khawas Khan and the opposition seemed to be pretty formidable. As ill luck would have it,

differences arose between Niazi and Khawas Khan and consequently both of them were defeated and they had to run for their lives. They suffered innumerable hardships and as Islam Shah was always on the watch, they could not do him any harm. After many ups and downs, they disappeared from the scene.

There was some misunderstanding between the king and Shujaat Khan and consequently the latter revolted. When the king went in pursuit of him, the latter refused to fight on the plea that he would not draw his sword against the son of his master. This fact so much influenced Islam Shah that he restored Shujaat Khan all his previous Jagirs and dignity.

Friendly relations were established with Mirza Haider, the ruler of Kashmir and the latter sent his envoys to the Delhi Court with presents of shawls and saffron as tokens of good-will.

There is no unanimity among historians regarding the treatment meted out by Islam Shah to Kamran, the brother of Humayun, when the latter visited him. There are some who say that Kamran was treated generously. There are others who maintain that the treatment was so bad that Kamran fled in the disguise of a woman.

The rule of Islam Shah was personal like that of his father, but he lacked all those qualities which made his father the idol of the nobles who were prepared to make all kinds of sacrifices for him. Islam Shah tried to crush the nobles one by one. He was thoroughly unpopular but he managed to rule by sheer force of character. He struck terror into the hearts of his opponents by his ruthlessness and energy. His policy was responsible for breaking the national unity among the Afghans. "The result was that on his death, the empire which he had held together in iron bonds, broke to pieces almost at once, to the great relief of most of its constituents."

Sometimes a comparison is made between Islam Shah and Ibrahim Lodi. It is pointed out that in both cases, there was a prolonged struggle for the throne. The relations between the king and the nobles became very bitter. Both of them shook the empire to its very foundations. However, it is pointed out that Islam Shah was in many ways superior to Ibrahim Lodi. Ibrahim was a very poor general. He was more arrogant and vain than an astute diplomat. He failed to suppress the revolts. He also failed to meet the attack of the Mughals. On the other hand, Islam Shah had a uniform success against the nobles. He also filled the Mughals with so much of awe and fear that they came to him either as supplicants or felt shy of approaching his frontier. With the single exception of Khawas Khan, Islam Shah was able to suppress all the rebels and conspirators. There is one defect of character in Islam Shah which cannot be ignored. He was hasty in his conduct. When aroused to anger, he could go to extreme lengths. When once offended, he was not gracious or forgiving. He was generally vindictive and revengeful and could inflict even the penalty of death on mere suspicion.

About Islam Shah, Dr. Tripathi says that he was a worthy successor to his father. A good student of literature and a patron of

men of letters, he distinguished himself in literary circles by his wit, humour, apt quotations from classics and appreciation of fine composition. At times, he composed extempore verses. He had studied canon law and theology and took an intelligent part in discussions on those subjects. His private life was well regulated. His manners were pleasant, polished and refined. He had distinguished himself as a good soldier and an able commander even as a prince. When he became a king, he added substantially to his reputation as a leader of inspiring courage, bravery and sound judgement. As a ruler, he was God-fearing, a protector of his subjects, a hard task-master and a vigilant, energetic and firm administrator. However, he was also haughty, suspicious, revengeful, ruthless and at times ferocious and cruel. His treatment of Niyazi women was outrageous, shameful and barbarous. The result was that he was feared but not loved. In handling the Afghans, he showed great firmness. He was bent on knocking out of their heads arrogance, pride and tribal chauvinism. He persecuted relentlessly and punished or destroyed any one who dared to defy him. He broke their power, prevented them from encroaching on royal prerogatives and deprived the troops of dancing girls and buffoons by whom they were usually surrounded. The policy of Islam Shah might have worked well by clearing the ground for organising the Afghan nobility on a new basis and creating a new bond between the sovereign and the nobility. The success of such a policy depended on its continuity for a fairly long time. Unfortunately, Islam Shah died prematurely and his successors were worthless. His task was not only left half-finished but produced undesirable results by destroying the morale and weakening the sense of honour of the Afghans which Sher Shah had revived. However, during the life-time of Islam Shah, discipline was maintained at a high level. His orders were implicitly obeyed.

Islam Shah was endowed with high imagination. He tried to give uniformity to the law and the legal procedure in the Empire. He followed broadly the administrative and agrarian policies of his father. He tried to improve upon them. He built more Serais and added to their amenities. He decentralised arrangements for free kitchens. He distributed maintenance grants and stipends on a wider and larger scale. He tried to discourage the Jagir system as far as possible under the circumstances. Sher Shah had made the Muqadams responsible for the crimes committed within their jurisdiction. The officials of the Government appointed to maintain law and order were not required to take their share in making good the losses or damages. Islam Shah removed the grievance of the Muqadams and made the officials share responsibility and penalty with them. Islam Shah maintained the efficiency of the army not only by continuing the policy of his father but also by introducing some new reforms. He remodelled the cavalry by fixing regular grades in the service. The troops were divided into units of 50, 200, 250 and 500. The army was organised into larger divisions of 5,000, 10,000 and 20,000 soldiers. Islam Shah also strengthened the artillery. He also added to the defence of the Empire by building 5 more fortresses, viz., Shergarh, Islamgarh, Rashidgarh, Firozgarh and

Mankot. Islam Shah not only maintained the Empire of his father but also added to it. But for the danger from the Mongols, he might have extended still further the frontiers of his empire. Dr. Tripathi observes that if Islam Shah had been alive, it is doubtful if Humayun would have dared to reconquer his lost empire. (*Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, pp. 152-56).

### **Muhammad Adil (1553-57)**

Islam Shah was succeeded by his son Firuz, who was put to death by Mubariz Khan, the son of Sher Shah's brother Nizam and the brother of Firuz's mother. Islam Shah had suspected Mubariz Khan in his life-time but no action was taken against him. Mubariz Khan was ignorant and dissolute. He did not possess those qualities which ought to be in a ruler. He took up the title of Muhammad Adil but he was called by his old nickname of Andhali (blind). He was hopelessly debauched and indifferent to public affairs. He was childishly extravagant. He was popular with the vulgar and unpopular with the higher strata of society. He was not competent to save the Afghan Empire from ruin. The people were not prepared to forget his murder of his nephew. According to Elphinstone, "His character was not such as to efface the memory of his crime; he was grossly ignorant, fond of coarse debauchery and low society, and as despicable from his incapacity as he was odious for his vices."

Reference may be made to the rise of Hemu who was appointed his Chief Minister by Muhammad Adil. He belonged to the Dhusar caste of Rewari. He rose by sheer dint of merit. He won the goodwill of his master and took up the title of Bikramajit by "masterpieces of feline trickery." He possessed business capacity and became famous for courage and valour by his deeds.

There was a lot of discontentment in the country and it showed itself in open sedition. When the king in open Darbar passed orders for the transfer of the Jagir of Muhammad Farmali to Sarmast Khan Sarwani, the son of the former killed the latter there and then. He might have killed the king as well if he had not escaped. It is true that both the father and son were killed in the Darbar itself but this incident gave a set-back to the authority of the king.

Taj Khan Karsani who was at Gwalior took the road to Bengal with the object of creating trouble in that province. He was joined by many others. However, all of them were pursued and defeated by Hemu.

There were fresh rebellions everywhere and it became difficult to suppress them. Sikandar Khan Sur, the cousin of the king, captured Delhi and Agra. Malwa, Punjab and Bengal declared their independence. The control of the king was effective only in the provinces east of the Ganges.

There were five Afghan kings struggling for power. Muhammad Shah Adali had Bihar, Jaunpur and the neighbouring districts under his control. Ibrahim Sur held Delhi and the whole of the Doab. Ahmed Khan Sur declared himself independent in the Punjab and took up the title of Sikandar Shah. Muhammad Khan.

became independent in Bengal and took up the title of Sultan Muhammad. Daulat Khan, son of Shujaat Khan, declared himself independent in Malwa.

The ruler of the Punjab was the first to move. He defeated Ibrahim and occupied Delhi and Agra. He became the master of the whole of the territory between the Indus and the Ganges. The condition in 1555 was that Ibrahim was planning to get back his dominion from Sikandar. Adali was preparing to turn out Ibrahim. Muhammad Shah was on the point of crossing his border and attacking Adali in Bihar. It was under these circumstances that Humayun defeated Sikandar Sur and occupied Delhi and Agra in the same year. Thus, the second Afghan Empire fell.

### **Causes of Downfall of Sur Empire**

The Sur Empire founded by Sher Shah fell due to many causes. (1) His successors were thoroughly incompetent and unfit to carry on his work of reconstruction. Instead of trying to secure the support of all the sections of society, they created dissensions and group-rivalries. Islam Shah was responsible for the destruction of many of those nobles who had a lot under Sher Shah. The success of Sher Shah was due to a large extent to their whole-hearted devotion and bravery. Islam Shah did not appreciate their contribution and as a matter of fact destroyed completely the very pillars of the Empire. Without such trusted officers as Khawas Khan, it was impossible to maintain the empire. Muhammad Adil was worse than his predecessor. Instead of setting the house in order, he added to the discontentment prevailing among the Afghan chiefs. The rise of Hemu made them bitter and jealous.

(2) It has already been pointed out that in the time of Muhammad Adil, there were five Afghan rulers struggling for power. There was no national solidarity among the Afghans. They were quarrelling among themselves unmindful of the fact that there was every possibility of the Mughals coming back under the leadership of Humayun and that is exactly what actually happened. According to Dr. Tripathi, "The noble sentiment of patriotism with which Sher Shah had been able to inspire and unite the Afghan nobles received such a shock at the hands of Islam Shah that it was practically destroyed. As soon as his commanding personality was removed, the pent-up feelings and ambitions of the Afghan nobles were let loose."<sup>1</sup>

(3) Sher Shah worked with the ideal of bringing about regeneration among the Afghans and did all that he could to bring them on a common platform. There was no such feeling among the Afghan chiefs and his successors. They all struggled for personal gain. Rivalries and jealousies ruined the Afghans altogether.

(4) The character of the Afghans deteriorated. They lost all sense of self-respect. It is stated that when Hemu charged them with

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1. Tripathi, R. P. : *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, p. 157.

cowardice, they "swallowed his insults like sweetmeats." The Afghans did not honour their word. They did not attach importance to the sanctity of their plighted word. Such a character cannot create or maintain empire. Only those nations rise which have regard for moral principles.

(5) The successors of Sher Shah ignored the lot of the peasantry. Nothing was done to protect them. The result was that they became indifferent towards the fate of Sur dynasty. The nobles became tyrants and crushed the people. An empire which does not bother about the condition of the people cannot last long.

(6) The example of Sher Shah was forgotten. The forts which he built in various parts of the country for purposes of defence became centres of mischief and sedition. A lot of money was wasted on punitive expeditions and bootless skirmishes. There was no proper collection of revenues. The officers kept the same to themselves. There was no audit of accounts and consequently a lot of money was embezzled. Poor finance weakens the foundations of the State.

(7) The Afghans did not bother to give justice to the people. The latter were ruled in an arbitrary manner. All kinds of punishments were inflicted on them. There was no regard for life or property. There was no bureaucracy devoted to the task of the State and no military class proud to die for its defence. There was absolutely no discipline anywhere. No wonder, the second Afghan empire fell.

The importance of Sur dynasty lies in the fact that it produced such a great man as Sher Shah who earned for himself a place of honour among the rulers and empire-builders of India. The changes made by him were adopted by Akbar and his successors as the basis of their government. After the fall of the Mughals, the English East India Company also retained the same administrative machinery more or less intact. It is clear that the genius of Sher Shah continued to affect the destiny of India for centuries.

#### SUGGESTED READINGS

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## CHAPTER V

# Akbar, the Great (1556-1605)

Akbar, the Great, was one of the greatest rulers of Indian history. He has become a hero whose memory is immortalized as a great king in the hearts of the people of India. The lapse of three hundred years has not diminished it in any way. It has been rightly stated that "he possessed that broad-minded sympathy, that capacity to trust and to evoke trust, that generous confidence in a loyal people, which enabled him to weld together a great and durable empire out of the poor fragments of military conquests left to him by his father."

### - Condition of India in 1556

Akbar came to the throne in 1556 after the death of his father, Humayun. At that time, he was a child of hardly 14. The throne he inherited was not a bed of roses. As a matter of fact, there was no throne at all. When Akbar got the news of the death of his father, he was at Kalanaur in the Gurdaspur District of the Punjab. It was at that place that Akbar was enthroned. An ordinary brick platform was prepared and the ceremony was performed. However, the ceremony did not strengthen the hands of Akbar. According to Dr. Smith, "It merely registered the claim of Humayun's son to succeed to the throne of Hindustan." It is well-known that Humayun had recovered Delhi in June 1555 but he had not found enough time to consolidate his position in India. Everything was still unsettled. The position of Akbar was so very shaky that he was advised by all except Bairam Khan to leave India and retire to Kabul.

It is true that Sikandar Sur had been defeated by Humayun, but it is also true that his power had not been crushed. He was still at large in the Punjab. He retained his pretensions to be the king of Delhi and Punjab. In the Eastern Provinces, the Afghans were strong under their king Mohammad Shah Adali. Adali's minister, Hemu, possessed a large army and was determined to prevent Akbar from taking possession of the dominion of his father.

The Rajput princes also possessed considerable strength and sitting in their forts, they were formidable enemies of Akbar. The

important Rajput princes were those of Mewar, Jaisalmer, Bundi and Jodhpur. These Rajput princes had increased their strength in the time of Humayun. They had increased their military strength to such an extent that they were thinking in terms of fighting against the Mughal Empire.

The States of Gujarat and Malwa had become independent. Their rulers acted in an independent manner and entered into diplomatic relations with other countries. Kabul at that time was under the control of Mirza Hakim, the brother of Akbar. He was acting as an independent ruler and was ambitious enough to entertain dreams of acquiring the empire of India. Both Sindh and Multan were independent and did not owe any allegiance to the ruler of Delhi. Likewise, Kashmir was being ruled by an independent Muslim ruler. Gondwana at that time was being ruled by Rani Durgawati, in the name of her minor son. The States of Ahmednagar, Bijapur, Golconda, Bidar, Berar and Khandesh were absolutely independent and their rulers did not owe any allegiance to the Sultans of Delhi. However, they were involved in continuous wars with the empire of Vijayanagar. At that time, the Portuguese were powerful both in the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. They had established their hold on the Western coast of India and possessed such important places as Goa, Daman and Diu.

The King was absolute and there was practically no check on his authority. He was assisted by a Wazir or Prime Minister whose position varied with the personal equation. In some cases, he was an uncontrollable viceregent and in others, only the Chief among the Ministers. The various provinces were ruled by the nobles and the King or the Sultan was simply their overlord. They were absolute within their jurisdiction and exercised all executive powers of the State. The King did not interfere in the internal affairs of the provinces. Each province had an army of its own under its own governor. The King depended partly on the soldiers of his nobles and partly on the troops recruited by himself.

As regards the social life of the people, the Hindus were looked down upon. They had to pay such discriminatory taxes as **Jizya** and pilgrimage tax. The people in general were steeped in superstitions and attached great importance to witchcraft, omens and dreams.

The economic condition of the people was simply deplorable. A famine was raging in full fury and was bringing havoc to the people. This was particularly so in the case of Delhi and Agra where thousands died of starvation. "The capital was devastated and nothing remained but a few houses. An epidemic plague ensued and spread through most of the cities of Hindustan. Multitudes died and men were driven to feed on human flesh, parties being formed to seize and eat solitary victims."

### **Second Battle of Panipat (1556)**

The immediate problem facing Akbar was to deal with the

rising power of Hemu, the Prime Minister of Mohammad Shah Adali of Bengal. On hearing the news of the death of Humayun, Hemu marched towards Agra and captured the same. Then he moved on to Delhi. Tardi Beg, the Mughal Governor, retired from that place and the city fell into the hands of Hemu who entered it as King Vikramajit. Hemu was a man of extraordinary personality. He was a **Baniya** by birth and he started his career as a shopkeeper. By sheer dint of hard work and honesty of purpose, he became a **chaudhry** in his own circle. This brought him into contact with the Government officials who introduced him into the Court of the Sultan. Within a short period, Hemu won the confidence of his master who employed him in different capacities. He proved himself to be a great administrator and general. No wonder, he became the right hand man of Muhammad Shah Adali. He won for him battles and conquered territories. Akbar had to deal with such a shrewd and ambitious man.

Undoubtedly, Akbar was in a desperate position. The expulsion of Tardi Beg added to the fears of his followers. In spite of that, he accepted the advice of Bairam Khan and decided to give battle to Hemu. In order to create an impression on his followers, Tardi Beg was executed.<sup>1</sup> The armies of Hemu and Akbar met on the historic battlefield of Panipat in November, 1556. At that time, a severe famine was going on at Delhi and in the neighbouring territory. To begin with Hemu seemed to carry the day. However, he was struck in the eye by an arrow and he became unconscious. This was a

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1. Tardi Beg was a Turkish nobleman. In the time of Humayun, he occupied a respectable position in the state. When Humayun died all of a sudden, Tardi Beg took over the reins of administration into his hands and kept the news concealed from the public for full seventeen days. He was partly responsible for the bloodless succession of Akbar. Kamran was present at that time in Delhi and if Tardi Beg so desired, he could have put forward his claims and thereby created trouble for Akbar. However, it was on account of his tact and loyalty that Akbar became the undisputed successor of his father. No wonder, the execution of Tardi Beg is a matter of controversy among the different historians. According to Smith, "The punishment, although inflicted in an irregular fashion without any trial, was necessary and subsequently just. It may be reasonably affirmed that the failure to punish the dereliction of Tardi Beg from his duty would have cost Akbar both his throne and life." According to Ferishta, if Tardi Beg had not been executed, the Chaghtai officers who considered themselves on equal footing with Bairam Khan, would not have submitted to the authority of Akbar.

However, Malleon and Ishwari Prasad do not approve of the execution of Tardi Beg. According to them, it was an act of high-handedness on the part of Bairam Khan. Malleon admits the fact that Tardi Beg evacuated Delhi in haste and left the city defenceless, but his contention is that "an error in tactics is not a crime, he had at least brought forward a powerful reinforcement to Akbar in Sirhind." According to Ishwari Prasad, "The manner in which Bairam brought about the murder admits of no palliation even on the ground that the interest of state demanded the crime." Jahangir tells us that there was a personal rivalry between Tardi Beg and Bairam Khan and consequently the latter brought about the downfall of his rival at the earliest opportunity. Moreover, Bairam Khan was Shia and Tardi Beg was a Sunni. Although Akbar did not approve of the action of Bairam Khan, he kept quiet as the circumstances demanded silence. The execution of Tardi Beg was probably one of the causes of the downfall of Bairam Khan in the long run.

turning point in the battle. The leaderless Afghan army fled away and 1500 war elephants and other booty fell into the hands of Akbar and Bairam Khan. Hemu was captured and brought before Akbar and Bairam Khan. According to Smith, Akbar "smote the prisoner on the neck." Arif Kandhari, a contemporary writer, supports this view. However, according to Dr. Srivastava, "Abul Fazl's statement that Akbar refused to kill an already dying man, is obviously wrong."

It cannot be said that the defeat of Hemu was the result of a mere accident. He himself was also partly responsible for it. He ought to have taken the offensive against the Mughals immediately after the withdrawal of Tardi Beg when his stock was very high and the followers of Tardi Beg were clamouring for retreat to Kabul. Moreover, when Hemu decided to send his army to the Punjab, he did not plan the same after due deliberations. Foolishly, he sent most of his artillery along with the vanguard. The result was that the artillery was captured by Ali Quli and that raised the morale of the Mughals and disheartened the Afghans under Hemu. Hemu also committed the mistake of directing the movements of his troops in person in the battle-field itself. He foolishly exposed himself by seating himself on an elephant. The result was that he was personally injured and that decided the fate of the battle. His elephant driver also made the mistake. Instead of carrying his master to a safe place within the army of his master, he tried to carry him away from the field of battle. This enabled Ali Quli to capture Hemu. Hemu also made another mistake in not providing for leadership of the army in the event of his death or incapacitation by injury. The result was that as soon as he was removed from the field of battle, the fate of the battle was decided. The ambitions of Hemu also were responsible for his defeat. Hemu himself wanted to become king and the result was that his master Adil Shah stayed back in the east. It is rightly pointed out that if Adil Shah had been present at Panipat, there would have been no stampede of the Afghans even after the capture of Hemu and it would not have been possible for the Mughals to win a victory.

The second Battle of Panipat was of far-reaching importance. The Mughals got a decisive victory over the Afghans. The Afghan pretensions to the sovereignty of India were gone once for all. Delhi and Agra were occupied.

### **Submission of Sikandar Sur (1557)**

Sikandar Sur had retired to the Siwalik Hills and Bairam Khan sent his forces there. The former shut himself in the hill fortress of Mankot. The fort was besieged and the siege continued for six months. Sikandar Sur sued for peace. He surrendered the fort. He was given a Jagir and his son was otherwise provided.

In 1557, Muhammad Shah Adali died as a result of his conflict with the ruler of Bengal. Thus, another antagonist of Akbar was disposed of without any effort on his part.

### **Bairam Khan**

Bairam Khan was a native of Badakhshan and professed

Shia faith. He served faithfully both Humayun and Akbar. He fought in the Battle of Kanauj in 1540 and was taken a prisoner. However, he managed to escape and joined Humayun in his wanderings. He accompanied him to Persia and there exercised his own influence to get for Humayun the support of the ruler of that country. He was with Humayun when the latter conquered Kabul, Kandhar and later on the Punjab, Delhi and Agra.<sup>1</sup> He was affectionately called Khani-baba (Lord Father).

It has already been pointed out that when Humayun died, Bairam Khan and Akbar were in the Punjab pursuing Sikandar Sur who was still not crushed. Akbar, a young man of 14, was in a very difficult situation. His followers advised him to retire to Kabul and from there attempt once again the conquest of India. However, it was Bairam Khan who opposed the idea and insisted upon giving battle to Hemu who had already occupied Agra and Delhi. The credit of winning the Second Battle of Panipat goes in a large measure to Bairam Khan. He may be accused of the execution of Tardi Beg but expediency required such an action to strike terror into the hearts of the traitors and cowards amongst the Mughal officials. He was also responsible for the execution of Hemu and his father.

After the Battle of Panipat, Bairam Khan, by virtue of his wisdom, age and experience, was able to acquire considerable influence over Akbar and became virtually the ruler of the country (1556-60). In this position, he continued the work of conquest. He conquered Gwalior and Jaunpur but failed in the case of Ranthambore. He also did not succeed in his designs on Malwa.

However, Bairam Khan did not remain in power for long. He fell in 1560 and his fall was due to many causes. He appointed Sheikh Gadai as Sadr-i-Sadur. As the Sheikh was a Shia, his appointment was resented by the Sunni Muslims who were in a majority in India. The Sheikh was exempted from the ceremony of homage. He was given precedence over the Ulema and the Sayyids. He was given the authority to endorse the decrees with his seal. All this created a lot of heart-burning. Sheikh Gadai became the target of attack.

Bairam Khan showered favours on his friends and followers. The titles of Sultan and Khan were given by him to his own servants and this was resented by the Muslim nobility. The title of Panchhazari was given by him to his own favourites and the claims of others were not considered. He adopted a discriminatory attitude in the punishment of the offenders. He severely dealt with the servants of the royal household but let off the servants of his own household. He ordered the execution of the elephant-driver of Akbar without any cause.

There was also a suspicion that Bairam Khan was plotting to place on the throne Abdul Qasim, a son of Kamran. This was considered to be the height of disloyalty which could not be ignored.

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1. Humayun is stated to have remarked thus about Bairam : "There is no lamp like thee in our family."

Bairam Khan was a Shia and his authority was resented by the Mughal nobles who were all Sunnis. They would like to pull him down from his high position. The execution of Tardi Beg created the feeling that Bairam Khan would not mind disposing of any noble, howsoever high he may be. This created a feeling of awe and terror in their minds and their personal safety demanded the removal of Bairam Khan.

Bairam Khan did not try to win over the nobles of the court. On the other hand, he was thoroughly unpopular. "His disposition was arbitrary, haughty and jealous and he could not easily tolerate the presence of possible rivals near his young master."

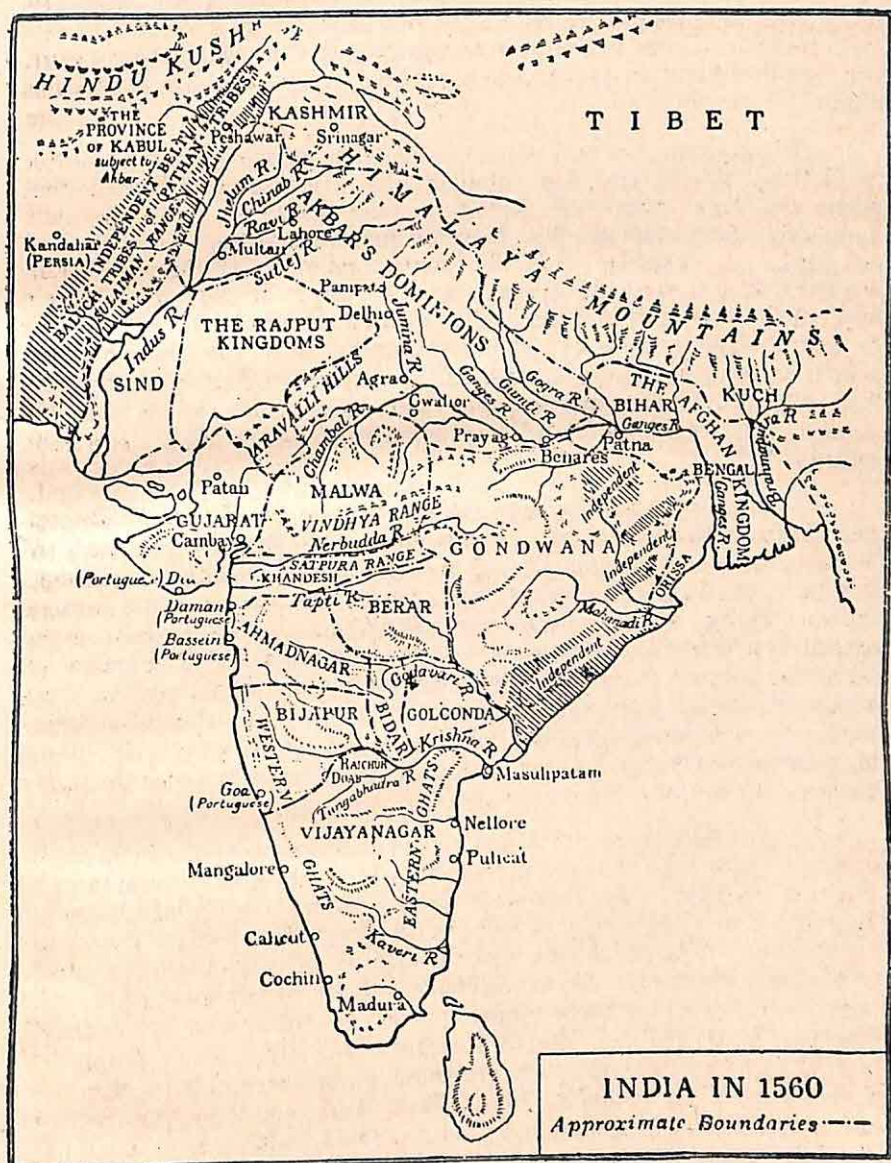
As Akbar began to grow in years, he made up his mind to take over the administration into his own hands. Bairam Khan did not seem to like the idea and did not behave in a proper way. This made Akbar impatient. There were also palace intrigues. Hamida Banu, the mother of Akbar, Maham Anaga, Adham Khan and Shahab-ud-Din, Governor of Delhi hated Bairam Khan and plotted to remove him. A conspiracy was hatched. Akbar went to Delhi to see his mother who was reported to be ill. It was at Delhi that Akbar wrote to Bairam Khan that he had decided to take into his own hands the reins of the government, and therefore the latter should retire to Mecca.<sup>1</sup> He also offered him a Jagir for his maintenance. Although Bairam Khan was advised by his followers to revolt, he refused to do so and submitted. Unfortunately, Pir Muhammad, a person whom Bairam Khan detested, was sent to hasten the departure of Bairam Khan from India to Mecca. This was not liked by Bairam Khan and he revolted. However, he was defeated and he begged forgiveness. That was generously given by Akbar who received him "with the most princely grace and presented him with a splendid robe of honour." Bairam Khan was allowed to proceed to Mecca with dignity. Unfortunately, he was murdered by an Afghan in Gujarat. His camp was plundered but his young son, Abdur Rahim, was saved. Later on, he rose to the position of Khan-i-Khanan and married a daughter of Prince Daniyal.

Dr. V. A. Smith has made the following observations on Bairam Khan : "The story of the transactions leading up to the fall and death of Bairam Khan leaves an unpleasant taste. It seems to be clear that the intriguers who surrounded and controlled the young Padshah were resolved to get rid of the Protector at any cost, and that they deliberately forced him into rebellion in order to ensure his destruction. For a long time, he steadily resisted the advice of Shaikh Gadaï and others who counselled open opposition, and if his enemies had abstained from the outrage of deputing Pir Muhammad to pack him off as quickly as

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1. The letter runs thus : "As I was fully assured of your honesty and fidelity, I left all important affairs of state in your charge and only thought of my own pleasures. I have now determined to take the reins of government into my own hands and it is desirable that you should now make a pilgrimage to Mecca upon which you have been so long intent. A suitable jagir will be assigned for your maintenance, the revenue of which shall be transmitted to you by your agents."

possible to Mecca, he would apparently have submitted to Sovereign's will, as his modern representative, Bismarck, submitted to William II, that is to say reluctantly, but as a matter of both necessity and duty. Bairam Khan obviously was only a half-hearted rebel, and was glad to be captured. Even Abul Fazl, who made the most of



the Protector's faults. and could hardly find language emphatic enough to express his sense of the alleged merits of Maham Anaga and Pir Muhammad, was constrained to admit that 'Bairam Khan was in reality a good man, and of excellent qualities'. The court

chronicler ascribes his deviations from the narrow path of rectitude to his association with evil advisers and his inordinate appetite for flattery. As a matter of fact, Bairam Khan, although misled sometimes by his partiality for Shia co-religionists, chose his instruments far better than Maham Anaga chose hers during her brief tenure of power. He had never needed to punish the traitor Tardi Beg, and so to save his master's cause. It is true that he made a mistake in giving his confidence at first to Pir Muhammad, but when he discovered the man's ingratitude and baseness, he had no hesitation in dismissing him.

"Both Humayun and Akbar owed their recovery of the throne to Bairam Khan, and the obligations of gratitude required that when the time came for Akbar to take the reins into his own hands the demission of his faithful charioteer should be effected as gently as possible. But the many enemies of Bairam Khan were not in a humour to make his exit easy. If they could have had their way unobstructed, they would certainly have put him to death. The generosity of his reception after the failure of his rebellion may be fairly attributed to young Akbar himself, who had little to do with the previous transactions, for which Maham Anaga was responsible, as her panegyrist Abul Fazl expressly affirms."<sup>1</sup>

According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "It was chiefly due to Bairam that Akbar owed his throne. It was inevitable that a youngman of Akbar's force of character should emerge from a state of tutelage, but he would have done well to wait, for he was not yet fit to assume the sole charge of his empire and remained for four years more under the pernicious influence of the harem party. The means by which he escaped from Bairam's influence were probably the best which he could have adopted but the insults and ungenerous treatment which drove the protector into rebellion would be a blot upon his memory were it not certain that they originated with Bairam's bitterest enemy in the harem party."

About Bairam Khan, Dr. A. L. Srivastava observes: "Besides being a good soldier and commander and a very able administrator, Bairam Khan was endowed with a talent for scholarship and a love of poetry. Humayun owed the recovery of his Indian dominion to him and Akbar his throne and the outline of administrative structure of his kingdom. He was a liberal patron of scholars and is said to have bestowed on three eminent men of letters and art, namely Hashmi Qandhari, Ram Das of Lucknow and Hijaz Khan Badayuni, one lakh of tankas each. The estimate of his character by the contemporary critical historian, Abdul Qadir Badayuni, who was a bigoted Sunni and hardly ever saw any good in a Shia, deserves to be equated." "In wisdom, generosity, sincerity, goodness of disposition, submissiveness and humility," writes he, "he (Bairam Khan) surpassed all. He was a friend to religious mendicants (Dervishes), and was himself a deeply religious and well-intentioned man. The second conquest of

1. Smith, V. A.: *Akbar, the Great Mughal*, pp. 47-48.

Hindustan and the building up of the empire were due to his strenuous efforts, his valour and his statesmanship'.

"He was driven into rebellion against his will, and was glad to submit to his sovereign and war. Akbar deserves credit for according him a very generous treatment in view of his long and meritorious services." (*Akbar the Great*, Vol. I, pp. 49-50).

### **Petticoat Government (1561-64)**

After the fall of Bairam Khan in 1560, Akbar came under the influence of Maham Anaga, his foster-mother. According to Dr. Smith, Akbar threw off the yoke of Bairam Khan only to be brought under the "monstrous regime of unscrupulous women". Maham Anaga proved to be unworthy of the trust reposed in her. She did not care for the interest of the country but merely favoured worthless persons. This point of view is not accepted by Indian historians. It is pointed out that if Maham Anaga had been all-powerful, she would certainly have helped her own son, Adham Khan, who had distinguished himself as a great general. Not only Adham Khan was not favoured, even the great influence of his mother could not save his life.

### **Adham Khan**

In 1561, Adham Khan was sent to subdue Baz Bahadur, an Afghan, who had captured Malwa. Adham Khan was assisted by Pir Mohammad. He was able to defeat Baz Bahadur near Sarangpur.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, he did not send the spoils of the conquest to the Emperor. Adham Khan tried to take possession of Baz Bahadur's Hindu mistress Rupmati. She killed herself by taking poison. Akbar did not approve of the attitude of Adham Khan in retaining the spoils. He left Agra and reached Malwa by forced marches. He took Adham Khan by surprise. He seized the spoils and removed Adham Khan from his office. Pir Mohammad was appointed in his place. However, Baz Bahadur took advantage of the weak government of Pir Mohammad and reconquered Malwa. Abdullah Khan Uzbeg defeated him and Baz Bahadur entered the Mughal service.

Adham Khan was the victim of a miscalculation. He wrongly counted upon the influence of his mother over Akbar. Adham

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1. According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "Pir Muhammad Khan and Adham Khan sullied their victory by the most revolting cruelty. The historian Badauni, who was an eye-witness of their atrocities, describes them as follows: "On the day of the victory the two commanders were in the camp, and the prisoners were brought before them and were put to death by the troops, so that their blood flowed in rivers."

"Pir Muhammad Khan cracked brutal jests on the wretched victims, and when Mihr 'Ali Beg Silduz, at Badauni's instance, represented that whatever might be done with rebels taken in arms it was not lawful to put their wives and children to death, Pir Muhammad replied, 'if we keep them for the night what will happen to them?'"

"In that night the plundering marauders stowed away their Muslim captives, the wives of holy and learned men, Sayyids, and nobles, in boxes and saddlebags, and carried them off to Ujjain and in other directions. Sayyids and holy men came forth, bearing copies of the Koran, to welcome the conquerors, and Pir Muhammad Khan slew and burnt them all." (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 78-80).

Khan stabbed Shams-ud-Din, the Minister of Akbar, in the royal palace. This was too much for Akbar. It is stated that he rushed to the spot and gave a blow to Adham Khan with his fist and knocked him down to the ground. Adham Khan was seized and thrown headlong from the terrace of the palace where the murder had taken place. This happened in May 1562.

### **Uzbek Rebellion (1564-67)**

Abdullah Khan Uzbek was one of the trusted officers of Akbar. It was he who was responsible for the conquest of Malwa from Baz Bahadur. However, he revolted against Akbar in July 1564. He was joined by other Uzbek nobles. The rebellion became formidable. Akbar marched against him and he was forced to retire to Gujarat. Ultimately, he went to Jaunpur where he joined hands with another Uzbek chief named Khan Zaman. According to Dr. Smith, "Akbar was considered to favour the Persian officers between whom and the Uzbek chiefs intense jealousy existed." The Uzbeks suspected that Akbar hated their entire race and was bent upon reducing them to a subordinate position. The result was that many of them joined the movement against Akbar. Khan Zaman or Ali Quli Khan who had rendered meritorious service in the Second Battle of Panipat also revolted in 1565. Asaf Khan who had distinguished himself in the campaign against Bundelkhand and Gondwana, also threw in his lot with the rebels. The trouble continued for a long time. The Mughal forces sent against Khan Zaman were defeated in 1565. Thereupon, Akbar himself took the field in person. Although the rebels made a show of submission, the matter did not end there. Akbar had to suspend his operations against the Uzbeks on account of the activities of Hakim Mirza, his brother. After dealing with his brother, Akbar crossed the swollen Ganges in May 1567 at night and attacked the rebels early in the morning. There was bitter fighting. Khan Zaman was killed. Bahadur Khan, his brother, was taken prisoner and executed. It is evident that the rebellion was crushed through the bravery and promptitude of Akbar.

### **Wars and Conquests of Akbar**

Akbar was a great general and conqueror. No wonder, he spent practically the whole of his life in making wars and adding to his territories.<sup>1</sup> It has already been pointed out that he defeated Hemu in the Second Battle of Panipat in 1556. In 1561, Adham Khan was sent to Malwa to subdue Baz Bahadur, an Afghan who had taken possession of that territory. After defeating Baz Bahadur, Adham Khan adopted a defiant attitude. The result was that Akbar himself went to Malwa and took Adham Khan by surprise. Adham Khan was removed from his office and Pir Muhammad was appointed in his place as the Governor of Malwa.

1. The policy underlying various conquests of Akbar was explained in these words by Abul Fazl: "The wise and judicious who understand the spirit of the age have said that if this civilised world, which has been split up owing to the inattention of great souls, were under one able and just ruler of extensive capacity, the dust of dissension would assuredly be laid and mortals find repose. Hence it is that the adorer of fortune's partner of our age (Akbar) is continually engaged in the conquest of other countries."

Baz Bahadur took advantage of the weak government of Pir Muhammad and reconquered Malwa. Akbar sent Abdullah Khan Uzbek who recovered Malwa from Baz Bahadur.

### **Conquest of Gondwana**

Gondwana was conquered in 1564. Gondwana was being ruled by Rani Durgawati who was a highly spirited lady. According to Abul Fazal, Durgawati ruled her country with wisdom and ability. She delighted in hunting and bringing down wild animals with her own gun. She was acting as regent for her minor son. Without any cause or justification, Asaf Khan, Governor of Kara, marched against Durgawati. She defended her territory bravely. She was outnumbered and defeated in a battle between Garh and Mandal in the modern Jubbulpore District. She died fighting in the battlefield. Her country was devastated and a lot of booty fell into the hands of the Mughals. Bir Narayan, the young son of Durgawati, also died fighting in the defence of his country. According to V. A. Smith, "Akbar's attack on a princess of a character so noble was mere aggression, wholly unprovoked and devoid of all justification other than the lust for conquest and plunder."

### **Wars against Rajputs**

Akbar followed a policy of reconciliation with the Rajputs. Some of the Rajput princes entered into matrimonial alliances with him. Akbar married in 1562 the eldest daughter of Raja Bihar Mal of Jaipur. In 1570, he married princesses from Bikaner and Jaisalmer. In 1584, Prince Salim was married to the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das. However, Mewar defied the might of Akbar. Consequently, Akbar made up his mind to march against Chittor and this he did in October 1567. As regards the causes of war between Akbar and Mewar, Abul Fazl says that Akbar's object was to punish Rana's audacious and arrogant pride due to his possession of big castles and mountains. According to Nizam-ud-Din and Badauni, the cause of the invasion was that Rana had extended his hospitality to Baz Bahadur of Malwa in 1562 and Akbar would like to punish him for that. According to V. A. Smith, the causes of the invasion were the political expediences and economic necessities implied in Akbar's aspiring for the domination of the whole of India. According to Sir Wolsley Haig, all the Rajput chiefs had submitted to Akbar and it was Mewar alone that had stood aloof and disclaimed entering into an alliance with the Mughal Emperor. Akbar did not like one solitary state in Rajasthan to behave like this towards him and he was forced to take up arms against Mewar. However, according to Dr. Sharma, "The thesis is disproved by the sober facts of history. Before Akbar had launched an expedition against Chittor in October 1567, the only Rajput family of note that had entered into an alliance with him was the Kachh-waha family of Amber (1562). In Rajasthan proper, Akbar had acquired one important fortress before his siege of Chittor and that was Merta (1562). Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaisalmer, the major states had not yet shown any sign of entering into any friendly alliance with Akbar. The truth, therefore, was that Akbar must

have felt that if he could bring about the reduction of Chittor and converted the Rana into his vassal, other Rajput states in Rajasthan like Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaisalmer, would submit without fighting. And Akbar was right. His policy was based on a correct understanding of the politics of Rajasthan and the psychology of the Rajput chieftains of the time. Within two or three years of the fall of Chittor, the rulers of Ranthambhor (1569), Jodhpur (1570), Bikaner (1570), and Jaisalmer (1570) submitted to Delhi and entered into matrimonial alliances with Akbar. Secondly, apart from the above psychological reason the security of Akbar's newly conquered dominion lay in establishing his supremacy over Rajasthan, particularly Mewar, whose ruler had given shelter, as we have seen, to Baz Bahadur of Malwa in 1562 A.D. A little before this time the Rana had welcomed at his court Jaimal of Merta who was defeated by Sharaf-ud-Din Husain (1562 A.D.) and driven out of that powerful fortress. Thirdly, without bringing Mewar or at least Chittor and a portion of its territory Akbar's expansion in the direction of Gujarat, which he coveted, was an impossibility. And finally, it became necessary for Akbar to move against Udai Singh, as Abul Fazl says, because Sakti Singh, the second son of the Rana, then in attendance at Akbar's court, had fled to Chittor from Dholpur in September 1567 A.D. without leave on a jestful remark of Akbar and reported to his father that Akbar was making preparations for the invasion of his country. In that age of chivalry, it was necessary that Akbar should show that he was not merely joking specially when several weighty reasons existed in favour of an expedition to Chittor. It should not be forgotten that the Rana and Akbar were hereditary adversaries and the father of reigning Sisodia chief and the grandfather of the Mughal emperor had engaged in deadly conflict for the supremacy in the country only about forty years before. Akbar was more ambitious than Babur and his interest lay in India. Hence it was inevitable for him to come into clash with the first Rajput chief in the country."<sup>1</sup>

Rana Udai Singh was the head of the Mewar state at that time. He was the posthumous child of Rana Sanga. He was an unworthy descendant of the house of Bapa Rawal. According to Tod, "He had not one quality of a sovereign and wanting martial valour, the common heritage of his race, he was destitute of all. Well had it been for Mewar had the poniard fulfilled its intentions and had the annals never recorded the name of Udai Singh in the catalogue of her princes."

Udai Singh had not the guts to face Akbar and he retired from Chittor to the mountains leaving the defence of the country into the hands of Jaimal. The siege of Chittor was a long one. The Rajputs put up a stiff resistance. All the attacks of the Mughals were repulsed. Consequently, Akbar decided to proceed by a regular sap and mine method. Two Sabats or covered approaches to the wall were built. The intention was to blow up a part of the fort by means of gunpowder. However, one of the mines ex-

1. Sharma : *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors*, pp. 66-68.

ploded earlier and was responsible for great destruction. A new work was started under the joint supervision of Kasim Khan and Todar Mal. A breach was made in the walls of the fort. In February 1568, Jaimal was supervising the repair of one of those breaches. Akbar saw and shot him dead with his own gun. "As usual in India, the fall of the commander decided the fate of the garrison." The Rajputs performed the Jauhar ceremony and after killing their women and children, they fell upon the enemy. About 8,000 Rajput warriors perished. Chittor fell into the hands of the Mughals in February 1568.

After Chittor came the turn of Ranthambhor which was the stronghold of the Hara section of Chauhans. It was considered to be impregnable in Rajasthan. Akbar started against Ranthambhor in December 1568 and reached the scene of action in February 1569. The Mughals were able to fix their guns at the top of another hill near the fort of Ranthambhor. The fire of the Mughal guns was too much for the fort of Ranthambhor. Surjana Hara, ruler of Ranthambhor, felt that it was impossible to hold the fort any longer. Through the good offices of Bhagwan Das and Man Singh, Surjana Hara sent his two sons, Duda and Bhola, to Akbar. The latter accepted the surrender and treated the young princes with great courtesy. Surjana Hara waited upon Akbar and handed over the keys of the fort of Ranthambhor to Akbar. He also entered the Mughal service and was appointed a Qiladar of Garhkantak. Later on, he was appointed the Governor of Banaras.

Tod in his Annals has given a graphic account of the treaty between the parties. The Chiefs of Bundi were to be exempted from the custom of sending a Dola to the royal harem. They were to be exempted from Jizya or poll tax. They were not to be compelled to cross the Attock. The vassals of Bundi were to be exempted from the obligation of sending their wives or female relatives "to hold a stall in the Mina Bazar" at the palace on the festival of Nauroza. They were to have the privilege of entering the Diwan-i-Aam or "hall of audience" completely armed. Their sacred edifices were to be respected. They were not to be placed under the command of a Hindu leader. Their horses were not to be branded with the imperial Daggh. They were to be allowed to beat their Nakkaras or kettle-drums in the streets of the capital as far as the Lal Darwaza or Red Gate. They were not to be commanded to make the "prostration" on entering the Presence. Bundi was to be Haras what Delhi was to the Mughal Emperor.

In 1569, Kalinjar was captured. Akbar sent Manjanu Khan to capture the fort of Kalinjar in Bundelkhand. When the ruler of Kalinjar got the news of the surrender of Ranthambhor and Chittor, he himself surrendered in August 1569. The capture of Kalinjar was a great military importance to Akbar on account of its position in Northern India.

Chandra Sen, the son of Raja Maldeo of Jodhpur, waited upon Akbar at Nagor. However, this friendship did not last long. Chandra Sen afterwards defied the authority of Akbar and retired to the hill fort of Siwana. Jodhpur was attacked and given over

to Rai Singh of Bikaner. Kalyan Mal, the father of Rai Singh, also paid homage to Akbar. Akbar married Kalyan Mal's daughter.

Udai Singh died in 1572 and was succeeded by Maharana Pratap. Soon after his accession to the throne, Pratap made up his mind to get back Chittor from the Mughals and vindicate the honour of the Rajputs. Many a time, he remarked in sorrow that if Udai Singh had not intervened between him and Rana Sanga, no Turk would have given laws to Rajputana. He followed the traditions of his family that "the son of Bapa Rawal should bow the head to no mortal man." No wonder, he set aside all the offers on the part of Akbar and his associates. The bravest of the brave among the Rajputs carried on an unequal struggle for a quarter of a century. It is true that there was no comparison between his resources and those of the Mughals.

According to Abul Fazl, Maharana Pratap was arrogant, presumptuous, deceitful, and disobedient. Evidently Abul Fazl could not be expected to speak highly of a man who carried on war against his master all his life. However, according to Dr. Smith, "Maharana Pratap's patriotism was his offence. Akbar had won over most of the Rajput chieftains by his astute policy and could not endure the independent attitude assumed by the Rana who must be broken if he would not bend like his fellows."

There is a story given in Rajput chronicles regarding the quarrel between Man Singh and Maharana Pratap. It is stated that once upon a time Raja Man Singh desired to have an interview with Maharana Pratap on the banks of the Udai Sagar Lake. A feast was arranged in his honour but Maharana Pratap did not attend it. Understanding the cause of Pratap's absence, Man Singh remarked thus: "If the Rana refuses to put a plate before me, who will?" Maharana Pratap expressed his inability to do so on the ground that he was not prepared to eat with a person who had married his sister to a Muslim. This was too much for Raja Man Singh and he left the table with the following remark: "It was for the preservation of your honour that we sacrificed our own and gave our sisters and daughters to the Turk; but abide in peril, if such be your resolve, for this country shall not hold

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1. Not much is known about the early life of Maharana Pratap. He was born on May 9, 1540. His accession to the throne was disputed by his younger brother, Jagmal, who was the son of the favourite wife of Udai Singh. However, Pratap was supported by the nobles of Mewar and hence he was put on the throne in February, 1572. According to Tod, "Pratap succeeded to the title and renowned illustrious house, but without a capital, without resources, his kindred and clans dispirited by reverses: yet possessed the noble spirit of the race, he meditated the recovery of Chittor, vindication of the honour of his house, and the restoration of his power. Pratap had to spend 4 1/2 years roaming about in the mountainous tracts of western Mewar. He acquired intimate knowledge of every nook and corner of the country. He also came into contact with those who in subsequent years became his companions and supporters. The circumstances of his early life hardened the character of Pratap and gave him a determination to struggle and fight for his people."

you." When Raja Man Singh was leaving Maharana Pratap appeared on the scene, and Raja Man Singh addressed the following words to him : "If I do not humble your pride, my name is not Man." The only reply of Maharana Pratap was that he would be happy to meet him on all occasions.

Regarding the cause of war between Akbar and Pratap, Dr. Sharma observes thus : "Akbar was throughout his political career a consistent imperialist. Pratap, on the other hand, stood for the independence of Mewar. A united empire under his (Akbar's) rule was his (Akbar's) aim and this necessarily meant the end of independence of individual Rajput states. Against this designed policy Pratap stood for the preservation of individual identity based on deep local attachments and racial memories. By joining the Mughals his state would cease to exist as a sovereign state and he would be a Mughal Jagirdar and his state a sarkar or pargana of the Mughal dominions. This would certainly do greater harm than good to his position. He valued his states more in a small compact, racially and culturally linked unit preserving the sovereign authority as against humbling himself by sending a representative to the Mughal court receiving instruction from Delhi and getting confirmation of hereditary rights from the emperor.

"Equally revolting was the idea in Pratap's mind to enter into a matrimonial alliance with the Mughal ruling family and send a 'dola' to Akbar's harem. Should it be right on his part to give his daughter and sister to the Mughal house like his fellow Rajputs ? Or should he resent it ? The answer to these questions he could seek from the traditional glory of his house which had even stood for the purity of blood and sanctity of racial greatness. He would never be the first man in his house to bring a blot on it. This is why he was prepared to stake his all for maintaining the traditional purity by not offering hands of the Rajput princess of his dynasty to an alien."<sup>1</sup>

Akbar could not put up with the attitude of Maharana Pratap and decided to crush him. The first battle between Pratap and the Mughals was fought near the Pass of Haldighati in 1576 and Maharana Pratap was defeated. The Mughal troops were commanded by Raja Man Singh and he was assisted by Asaf Khan. The Maharana guarded the pass of Haldighati with his 3,000 horsemen. The **Battle of Haldighati** was a ferocious one. It was a hand-to-hand fight from morning till mid-day. Maharana Pratap was at his best. However, he got a serious wound and retired into the hills. The victors were too exhausted to pursue him. Next day, the Mughals reached Gogunda. Thus the Mughals got a complete victory.

The battle was remembered long after in every part of India. According to R.C. Dutt, "For many years afterwards in Delhi, in South India, in Bengal, hoary-headed Mughal warriors would pass the night regaling youthful soldiers with tales of Haldighati and the amazing deeds of Pratap Singh." Dr. A. L. Srivastava says :

1. *Mewar and the Mughal Empire*, pp. 87-88.

"Haldighati proved to be as barren a victory as it was hard-won. Man Singh's campaign failed in its primary object, viz., the death or capture of Rana Pratap and the subjugation of Mewar. The 18th of June in the burning hills of western Mewar was so hot that 'the very brain boiled in the cranium' and 'the air was like a furnace and no power of movement was left in the soldiers.' Naturally the exhausted Mughals were unable to pursue the fugitives and the Rana escaped safely to Koliyari, west of Gogunda, where he spent the night following the battle in security. Moreover, the Mughals were apprehensive of being ambushed, and they believed that the Rana had concealed his troops behind the hills and might renew the contest." Again, "The battle did not break the Rana's power ; it only caused a temporary set-back to his fortune. From more than one point of view the battle proved to be a blessing in disguise. Far from disheartening him or making him give up resistance, it stiffened the Rana's attitude and gave him fresh confidence. The brave stand of his troops against the most powerful and the richest monarch on earth convinced him of his moral strength and determined him to continue the struggle. Haldighati is a dividing line between Pratap's policies and activities before June 18, 1576 and after that date." (**Akbar the Great**, Vol. 1. pp. 211-12, 213.)

As regards the causes of Rana's defeat, Dr. G. N. Sharma observes thus : "The time honoured practice of war which the Rana followed brought ruin to him. At such a pass it was not necessary to arrange his men in battle array as he did. The best course would have been to post his various divisions at various points in such a manner as to encircle the enemy inside the pass and not to allow him to escape without suffering death or destruction. In the second place, immediately after the retreat of the Mughal vanguard it was not right on the part of Rana to rush to the plain below with full force, which tired out the Rajputs at the first outset. Thirdly, the accounts of the battle as given in the Rajput and Muslim sources show that the Rana could not maintain order among his troops after his second attack on the Mughals who, on the other hand, succeeded in rallying their men and maintaining order. The superior number of the enemy and their bold stand could not but lead to the retreat of the Rana and his followers."<sup>1</sup>

Badauni tells us that Akbar was not pleased with Man Singh on the ground that the latter did not pursue the Rana and also did not allow the troops to plunder the territory of Maharana Pratap. Akbar recalled Man Singh, Asaf Khan and Qazi Khan and excluded them from the court for some time. According to Abul Fazl, "Tricksters and time-servers suggested to the Royal ear that there had been slackness in extirpating the wretch, and the officers were ready incurring the king's displeasure. But his Majesty understood the truth and attached little value to what the back-biters told him." According to Nizam-ud-Din, Akbar was displeased on account of the fact that Pratap's territory was not allowed to be plundered by the troops.

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1. *Mewar and the Mughal Empire*, p. 105.

In spite of his defeat in the Battle of Haldighati, Maharana Pratap persevered in his determination to win back his territory from the Mughals. In spite of the heavy odds, he was able to recover all Mewar except Chittor, Ajmer and Mandalgarh. He had to suffer innumerable difficulties but he did not give up heart. The whole of Rajasthan resounded with his fame. Even Akbar himself talked highly of Pratap.

However, this great Rajput general died in 1597. He was worn out both in body and mind. It is stated that he was unhappy at the time of his death. When he was asked the cause of his sorrow at that time, he remarked thus: "It (my soul) lingered for some consolatory pledge that his country should not be abandoned to the Turk." Maharana Pratap feared that his sheds will give way to sumptuous dwellings, thus generating the love of ease. Luxury with all its concomitants will ensue and the independence of Mewar will be sacrificed. It is stated that Amar Singh and his nobles gave a promise to Pratap that they will carry on his mission after his death. It was then that Pratap got satisfaction and died in peace.

In the words of Tod, "Thus closed the life of a Rajput whose memory is even now idolised by every Sisodia and will continue to do so till renewed oppression shall extinguish the remaining sparks of patriotic feeling. May that day never come. Yet if such be her destiny it at least not be hastened by the arms of Britain. There is not a pass in the Alpine Aravali that is not sanctified by some deed of Pratap—some brilliant victory or oftener more glorious defeat. Haldighat is the Thermophylae of Mewar; the field of Demeis and her Marathon." Again, "Had Mewar possessed her Thucydides or her Xenophon, neither the wars of the Peloponnesus nor, the retreat of the 'Ten Thousand' would have yielded more diversified incidents for the historic muse than the deeds of this brilliant reign amid the many vicissitudes of Mewar. Undaunted heroism, inflexible fortitude, that sincerity which keep honour bright, perseverance with fidelity such as no nation can boast of, were the materials opposed to the soaring ambition, commanding talents, unlimited means, and the fervour of religious zeal; all, however, insufficient to contend with one unconquerable mind."

According to Dr. G. N. Sharma, "As a general and a leader of men in war, Pratap was a person suited to the need of his own time. It is true he committed a sad mistake by engaging himself and his army in a frontal attack on the Mughals at the Battle of Haldighati where four hours of action brought disaster and ruin; but equally true is the fact that he made amends by following subsequently the policy of abandoning a post and retreating to a safe place whenever necessary and rallying his strength in his hilly shelters. Cutting the enemy's communications, surprise attacks and retreat, the new tactics applied scientifically to his advantage against heavy odds, were legacies which he gave to the generations following him. His defensive mountain warfare became a technique in itself. The application of Bhil infantry for dash and sudden attacks added a novelty to his system of warfare which no one can ignore."

"Great as he was, one might speculate whether the struggle tended to contribute to the welfare of the country as a whole or produced adverse effect on the future of the land. It is also to be admitted that Akbar was a great and benevolent sovereign who pursued the grand policy of unifying the country both politically and culturally. Pratap's remaining aloof from the union was a great impediment in that noble task. To that extent it was injurious to the interest of his country. If at this stage Pratap would have joined the Mughal order he could have saved his country from disaster and ruin. Even his long resistance could not avert the days when during his own son's time Mewar became a subordinate state of the Mughal empire. Had this opportunity been given to Mewar earlier, much of its backwardness could have been mended. But Pratap's name is immortal in the history of our land as a great soldier of liberty who concentrated his attention on this moral aspect of the struggle he had to wage without caring for material advantage or loss involved. He upheld the pride of the Hindus and as long as this race lives, it will cherish with pride the memory of one who had staked his all in a fight against an alien. As a great warrior of liberty, a devoted lover of noble cause and a hero of moral character his name is to millions of men even today, a cloud of hope by day and a pillar of fire by night."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Tripathi says: "Rana Pratap's heroism, sturdy independence, love for freedom, readiness to suffer and sacrifice have inspired a large number of modern writers to read in his struggle facts not quite justified by sober history. Some Persian writers including Abul Fazl have spoken lightly of the gallant Rana, while others condemned Akbar and Man Singh. It was not a Hindu and Muhammadan question, nor a conflict between Hinduism and Islam. It was simply a conflict between the Mughal empire and the state of Mewar. Had it been otherwise, Rana Pratap would not have placed one of his divisions under Hakim Khan Sur, nor Akbar his whole army under Man Singh. The same spirit which had led Akbar to vanquish Baz Bahadur of Malwa, Muzaffar of Gujarat, Daud of Bengal, Mirza Jani Beg of Sind and Yusuf of Kashmir had brought him into conflict with Rana of Mewar. If Mewar were ruled over by a Muhammadan prince Akbar would have dealt with him in the same manner. There is not a shred of evidence to suggest that in his war with Mewar, Akbar was actuated by any other but purely political motives. Imperialism may be good or bad but it cannot be denied that both the Hindus and Mohammadans subscribed to it as freely as the Europeans.

"However one may admire the courage, determination and indomitable will of Rana Pratap, it will have to be admitted that he stood for a principle quite different to that which inspired his contemporary princes of Rajputana. While he fought for the independence of Mewar and the supremacy of the Sisdoias, the other princes could not feel enthusiastic about it, for, their past experience of the policy of the great rulers of Mewar was not very happy. It would be absurd to maintain that the rest of the Rajputs had become cowards

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1. *Mewar and the Mughal Empire*, pp. 120-21.

and were so thoroughly demoralized as to sell their freedom for a mess of pottage. Their record in history totally belies such a gratuitous presumption. As before, they would have fought against Akbar shoulder to shoulder with Rana had they felt that their heart, home, religion and freedom were in danger. By his dealings with other Rajput princes Akbar had clearly shown that he did not wish either to annex their states, or interfere with their social, economic and religious life."<sup>1</sup>

After the death of his father in 1597, Amar Singh carried on the war against the Mughals. The latter took the offensive once again in 1599 and Raja Man Singh and Prince Salim were sent to invade Mewar. Amar Singh was defeated and his country was devastated by the Mughal troops. The war had to be stopped because Man Singh had to leave for Bengal where Usman Khan had revolted. The bad health of Akbar did not allow him to invade Mewar once again.

### **Conquest of Gujarat**

V.A. Smith rightly observes: "The conquest of Gujarat marks an important epoch in Akbar's history." There were many reasons which actuated Akbar to conquer Gujarat. Humayun had occupied it in 1536 and Akbar could claim Gujarat as a lost province of the Mughal Empire. However, the wealth and maritime commerce of Gujarat were enough temptation for Akbar to annex that province. Muzzaffar Shah III, the ruler of Gujarat, had practically no authority over his powerful vassals. One of his nobles called Itimad Khan, invited Akbar to interfere in the affairs of Gujarat. Akbar reached Ahmedabad in November, 1572. Muzzaffar Shah did not offer any resistance and submitted before Akbar. After making the necessary arrangements for administrative purposes, Akbar retired to Fatehpur Sikri. Akbar had hardly reached his destination when he heard of the trouble in Gujarat once again. He rushed back to Gujarat and it is stated that he completed a journey of 600 miles in 9 days. It was a marvellous feat of endurance. He won a decisive victory in September 1573. A few more expeditions had to be undertaken before Gujarat was completely subdued and annexed in 1584.

The annexation of Gujarat was of great advantage. The Mughals got free access to the sea. The conquest of Gujarat brought the Mughals into touch with the Portuguese. Raja Todar Mal made his first revenue settlement in Gujarat. According to Kennedy, "Gujarat was used as a jumping off point for invasions of the Deccan."

### **Conquest of Bengal**

Daud Khan was the Afghan ruler of Bengal. He was the son of Sulaiman who had founded a new dynasty in Bengal in 1564. Sulaiman recognised the supremacy of Akbar and continued to live on terms of friendship. Daud succeeded his father in 1572. He was a rash and headstrong youth who had great confidence in the military resources of Bengal. Daud annoyed Akbar by capturing the fort of

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1. Tripathi, R. P. : *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, pp. 222-23.

Zanania. Akbar sent orders to the Governor of Jaunpur to teach him a lesson. As the Governor was not successful against him, Akbar deputed Todar Mal to do the needful in the matter. It was due to the ceaseless efforts of Raja Todar Mal that Bengal was added to the Mughal Empire between 1576 and 1580. When the Afghans revolted once again in favour of Hakim Mirza, brother of Akbar, Man Singh reconquered the country in 1592.

### **Annexation of Kabul (1585)**

So long as Hakim Mirza lived, Kabul remained in his possession. Akbar did nothing to deprive him of that territory. In 1579-80, he tried to capture the Punjab. Akbar himself rushed from Bengal to meet the danger. However, Hakim Mirza ran away to Kabul at the approach of the Mughal troops. Hakim Mirza was pursued by Prince Murad but all the same he was allowed to retain Kabul for the rest of his life. When he died in 1585, the province of Kabul was annexed to the Mughal Empire and Man Singh was appointed its Governor. It was a difficult task to control the Afghans. In 1586, Raja Birbal was killed. The Mughal troops suffered heavy losses and retreated with great difficulty.

### **Conquest of Kashmir (1586-87)**

Yusuf Shah was the ruler of Kashmir. He committed great cruelties on his Hindu subjects. This gave Akbar an excuse for interfering in the affairs of Kashmir. Raja Bhagwan Das was sent with 5,000 men to conquer Kashmir. In spite of the difficulties on the way, Raja Bhagwan Das persevered in his task and forced the ruler of Kashmir to surrender. The son of Yusuf Shah escaped and he continued the struggle for some time. However, he too was defeated and forced to surrender. Kashmir was annexed and made a part of the province of Kabul. Akbar visited Kashmir in 1589. Yusuf Shah and his son got Jagirs and were made Mansabdars.

### **Conquest of Sind (1591)**

Akbar subdued Bhakkar in 1574 but a large part of Southern Sind was still to be conquered. Akbar attached great importance to the conquest of Sind because its possession was expected to help him in the conquest of Qandhar. In 1590, Mirza Abdur Rahim was appointed the Governor of Multan and was instructed to take over the work of the conquest of Sind. Mirza Jani Beg was its ruler. After two battles, he surrendered. On account of the recommendation of Abdur Rahim, Jani Beg was given a very good treatment.

### **Conquest of Qandhar (1595)**

Akbar was desirous of capturing Qandhar. At this time the Shah of Persia was in great difficulty on account of the activities of the Turks and Uzbeks. Akbar took advantage of the other pre-occupations of the Shah of Persia and sent an expedition to conquer Qandhar. The work was started in 1590 but was accomplished in 1595 when Qandhar was annexed to the Mughal Empire. Undoubtedly, the conquest of Qandhar was a master-stroke of diplomacy on the part of Akbar. Without spoiling his relations with the Shah of Persia, Akbar was able to acquire Qandhar.

The turbulent tribes of the Uzbegs and the Yusufzais were "very dangerous in their native hills, being democratic to a degree and fanatically attached to their liberty. Fighting in the fastnesses of their country which afford the best of natural defences, they ever resisted any attempts to bring them into subjugation to any of the adjoining monarchies." Their attitude towards Akbar was unfriendly. Akbar suppressed the Uzbegs completely. A large Mughal army under Raja Todar Mal and Prince Murad was sent against the Yusufzais and they were crushed. According to Abul Fazl, "A large number of them were killed and many were sold in Turan and Persia. The countries of Sawad (Swat), Bajaur and Buner, which have few equals for climate, fruits and cheapness of food, were cleansed of the evil-doers."

The Roshniyas were the followers of Bayazid who "had been preaching a special form of Mohammedanism in which communism on the one hand and the destruction of the enemies of Islam on the other, seem to have been two of the leading features. Add to this his suggestion that he was the Mehdi to come and we have all the elements of religious explosion" (Kennedy). The Roshniyas were defeated and completely crushed. Thus, there was no trouble from the North-West Frontier.

### **Conquest of Ahmednagar**

After completing the conquest of Northern India, Akbar diverted his attention towards the Deccan. To begin with, he sent political missions to induce the rulers of the Deccan States to accept his suzerainty. However, he was unsuccessful in that mission. This forced Akbar to follow the path of war. Ahmednagar was the first to be attacked. Abdur Rahim and Prince Murad were sent in 1595. At that time, Chand Sultana was acting as the regent on behalf of her nephew. She boldly defended the city of Ahmednagar and behaved like a great general. It is stated that she appeared in the ramparts of the city in full armour and with drawn sword to encourage her troops.

"Chand Bibi appeared with a veil on her head. She got guns to be brought to bear on the assailants, and stones to be hurled on them, so that they were repulsed in several repeated attacks. During the night, she stood by the workmen and caused the breach to be filled up nine feet, before daylight, with wood, stones and carcasses." Moreover, Prince Murad and Abdur Rahim did not see eye to eye with each other and consequently their campaign was not a success. The Mughals made peace and contented themselves with the acquisition of Berar alone. Thus, the first campaign against Ahmednagar ended in 1596. However, peace did not last long. There arose internal dissensions in Ahmednagar and the result was that Chand Sultana was murdered. Moreover, the Government of Ahmednagar did not keep its word with the Mughal Government and tried to recover Berar. A battle was fought in February, 1595 at Ashti and both the parties claimed victory for themselves. Occasional fights continued. Akbar decided to take the command in person. In 1600, he occupied Burhanpur and sent Prince Daniyal with Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, to conquer Ahmednagar. The Mughal troops did not

find much difficulty in their way. About 15,000 of the garrison were put to the sword and Ahmednagar was annexed to the Mughal Empire.

### Asirgarh

Akbar decided to capture the fort of Asirgarh<sup>1</sup> which was well defended. It was considered to be "one of the strongest and best equipped fortresses in the world at that time." The siege of Asirgarh continued for about 6 months and the Mughals did not make much headway. At that time, the news of Salim's rebellion came. Thus Akbar was forced to have recourse to treachery. Bahadur was persuaded to come to the camp of Akbar for the purpose of negotiations, and was detained there. The siege was pushed up with great vigour but in spite of that the garrison held out. It was in January, 1601 that "the gates were opened by golden keys or in other words Akbar corrupted the Khandesh officers by heavy payments." Thus it was that the fort of Asirgarh fell into the hands of the Mughals in 1601.

There are two versions about the manner in which Asirgarh was captured. One view is that the fort was captured by unfair means, heavy bribery and corruption. The other view is given by Ferishta. He points out that as the siege of Asirgarh lasted for a considerable time, "the air, on account of a number of troops cooped up in the fort, became unhealthy. This occasioned a pestilence which swept off several of the garrison." V.A. Smith has adopted Du Jarrie's narrative based on the letters of Jerome but Payne, the English editor of Du Jarrie, doubts if Abul Fazal's version of the pestilence in Asirgarh was altogether unfounded. Du Jarrie himself does not mention such a pestilence. It may be that the fact of such a pestilence might not be a total invention but it is certain that the estimate of Abul Fazal that 25,000 men died as a result of it was an exaggeration. Mr. Justice Shelat says that there can hardly be any doubt that the ignoble methods by which the strongest fort in India was captured by Akbar must for ever remain a slur on his reputation.

The result of Akbar's Deccan policy was that the Mughal frontier was pushed from the Nerbada to the upper course of the river Krishna. The newly conquered territories were converted into three Subas of Ahmednagar, Berar and Khandesh. However, the annexation of the three Subas was merely in name. The new territory was not completely subdued. The local officers who were connected with the former ruling dynasties created difficulties and no

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1. Asirgarh was on the main road from the Deccan to the North. In the 16th century, this Fort was considered to be one of the strongest forts in India and indeed a wonder of the world. The hill on which it was built was on a spur of the Satpura range, about 900 feet above the plain below. The main fort itself was surrounded by three subsidiary forts, the Mali, Antar Mali and Koshi. No other fort could have so much provisions, guns and equipment. The summit of the hill, a space of about 60 acres in extent, was amply provided with water from several reservoirs and except at two points access to that summit was barred by inaccessible cliffs. Stores and provisions were collected by ruler after ruler which could last the garrison for at least ten years.

successful government could be set up. The distance from the North also added to the difficulties of the Mughals.

Nasik and Daulatabad were still in the hands of Deccanis. Their leaders appointed Ali, the son of Shah Ali, the third son of Burhan, as the new Nizam-ul-Mulk at Daulatabad. He and one Raju constantly stirred up resistance against the Mughal authority in the Deccan. Mirza Abdul Rahim, therefore, had to go to Ahmednagar and Abul Fazl to Nasik. From Burhanpur, which Danial made his headquarters, the Prince kept on moving his generals from place to place to retain the conquered parts under the imperial domination.

Regarding the conquests of Akbar, Dr. A. L. Srivastava observes thus: "Akbar invariably followed the policy of giving an organised administration to his conquests. As soon as a principality or a province was reduced to submission, he took steps to establish therein complete order and peace, and to appoint civil officers to carry out a revenue settlement which was based on the principles of measurement and classification of land. Religious toleration was extended to the newly-conquered areas. Social, religious, as well as administrative reforms were introduced and the interests of the people, social, moral and material, were consulted. As will be shown hereafter, Akbar, unlike his predecessors, including Sher Shah, gave a uniform system of administration to all the provinces of his empire and paved the way for establishment of a common nationality in the land."

### **The Portuguese**

In his dealings with the Portuguese, it was found by Akbar that it was not an easy job to drive them out from India. Akbar was very much upset on account of the Portuguese behaviour on the Arabian Sea, their interference with Indian shipping and their policy of religious persecution, particularly against the Muslims. The Deccan States had tried to subjugate the Portuguese and failed. In 1569-70, the rulers of Ahmednagar, Bijapur and the Zamorin made a united effort to defeat the Portuguese but they failed. In 1580, the Sultan of Bijapur lost Goa to the Portuguese and all the Muslim men, women and children were butchered. In 1509, the Portuguese won a decisive victory over the combined fleets of the Gujaratis and Egyptians. In 1530, they sacked and burnt the towns of Rander and Surat. In 1531, they starved Diu and killed everyone on that island. The eastern fleet of Ottoman Sultan Sulaiman was defeated by the Portuguese during the period 1551-54. In 1558, they got the port of Daman.

When Gujarat was conquered by Akbar, he found the Portuguese well established all along the Western coast of India. In 1575, the Portuguese interfered with the Royal aunt and ladies who were on a pilgrimage to Mecca. An attempt was made to recover Daman in 1582 but the same failed. The Portuguese tried to plunder Surat but the same was saved by the timely arrival of Mughal army. Akbar could deal with the Portuguese only if he could build up a strong navy and as he could not do so, the Portuguese power could not be destroyed.

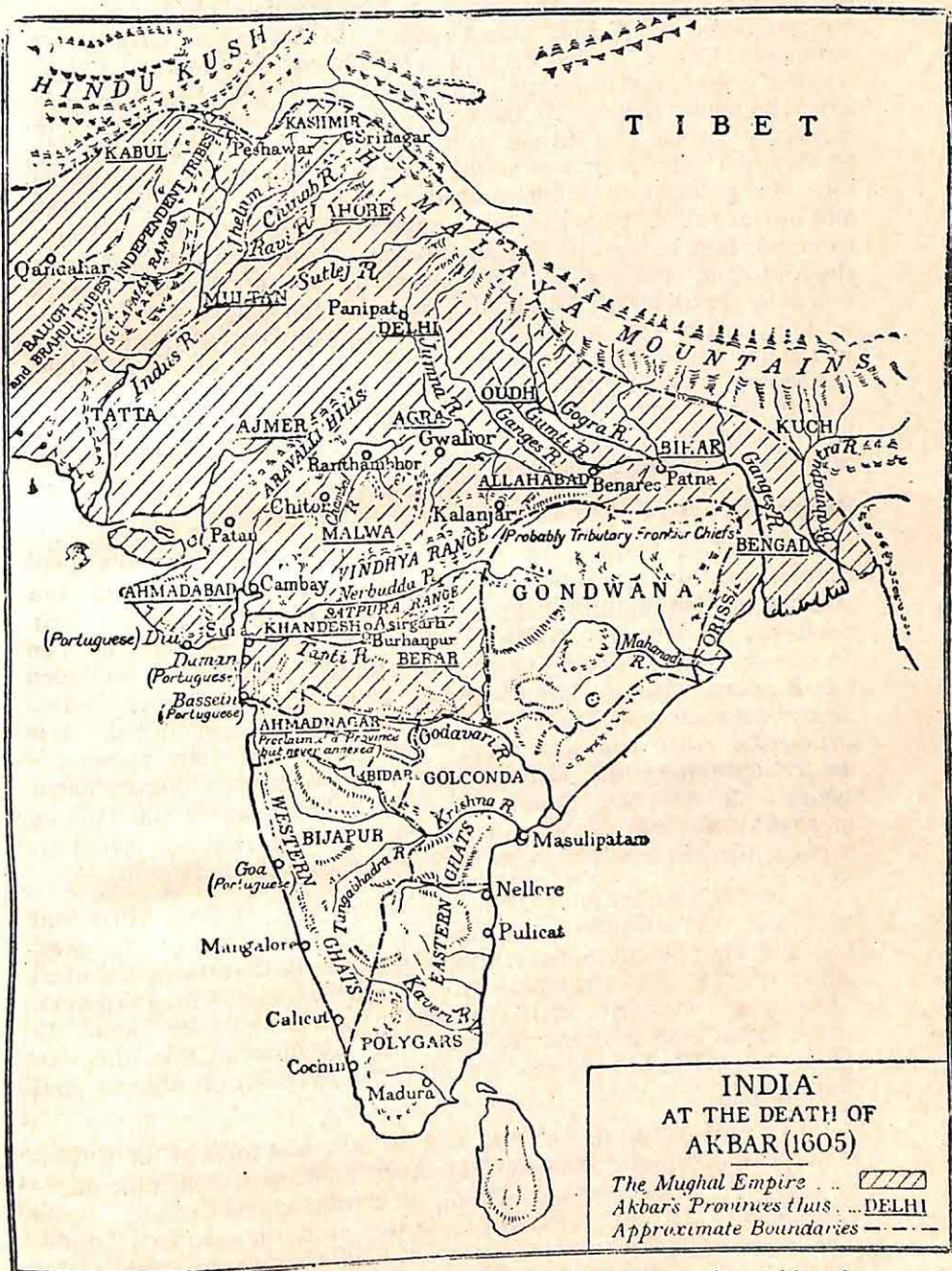
### Akbar as Founder of Mughul Empire<sup>1</sup>

A question has sometimes been raised as to who was the real founder of the Mughal Empire in India. It goes without saying that Babur laid the foundations of the Mughal Empire in India by defeating Ibrahim Lodi in 1526 at the first Battle of Panipat. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "The Battle of Panipat placed the Empire of Delhi in Babur's hands. The powers of the Lodi dynasty were shattered to pieces and the sovereignty of Hindustan passed to the Chughtai Turks." Babur may be called the founder of the Mughal Empire because he destroyed the Lodi dynasty and laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire on its ruins. In 1527, he defeated Rajput confederacy under Rana Sanga in the Battle of Kanwah. According to Prof. Rushbrooke Williams, the Battle of Kanwah put the Mughal Empire of India on a firm footing. In 1528, Babur subdued Medini Rao and captured the fort of Chanderi. In 1529, Babur defeated Mahmood Lodi, brother of Ibrahim Lodi, in the Battle of Ghagra. If Babur had lived longer, he would certainly have consolidated his Empire and there would have been no scope for the revival of the Afghans. The early death of Babur left the work incomplete and consequently the spadework done by him came to nothing.

Humayun succeeded to the throne in 1533 but he was defeated in the Battle of Kanauj by Sher Shar Suri and driven from Agra and Delhi. Thus, the Empire founded by Babur was destroyed. However, Humayun won back Kandhar, Kabul, the Punjab, Delhi and Agra before his death in 1556. In this case also, the sudden death of Humayun left the Mughal position in India insecure. Akbar succeeded to a shaky throne. Soon after his succession to the throne in 1556, he heard the news that Tardi Beg, the Mughal Governor of Agra and Delhi, was turned out by Hemu. Akbar's position in the Punjab, where he was at the time of his father's death, was very insecure. Silkandar Sur was still at large in the Punjab. He was a potential foe. Thus it is evident that Akbar inherited nothing of the Mughal Empire founded by Babur. It has already been pointed out at the beginning of this Chapter that in 1556, India was a congeries of independent states and there was no paramount power in the country. Akbar had to begin from a scratch. He won back Delhi and Agra after the second Battle of Panipat, Sikandar Sur was pursued and he ultimately surrendered and Akbar's control was thereby established in the Punjab. Gwalior and Jaunpur were conquered in 1557. Malwa was conquered in 1560, Gondwana was conquered in 1564. Chittor was captured in 1568. Maharana Pratap was defeated in the Battle of Haldighati in 1576. Gujarat was finally annexed in 1584. Bengal gave trouble for some time but was finally conquered in 1592. Kabul was annexed in 1585. Kashmir was conquered in 1586. Sind was conquered in 1591, Qandhar was ann-

1. According to V. A. Smith, "At the time of his accession, Akbar could not be said to possess any kingdom but it was Akbar's genius and Bairam's loyalty that achieved a great kingdom." According to Beveridge, "Akbar was a strong and stout annexationist before whose sun the modest star of Lord Dalhousie looked pale."

exed in 1595. Ahmednagar was conquered in 1600 and Asirgarh in 1601. It was this Empire created by the valour and statesmanship



of Akbar that is the envy of the historians. No wonder, Akbar is called the real founder of the Mughal Empire in India.

According to Hunter, "On his (Akbar's) accession in 1556, he found India split up into petty Hindu and Mohammadan kingdoms,

and seething with discordant elements, On his death in 1605, he bequeathed it an almost united empire." According to Tod, "Akbar was the real founder of the empire of the Mughals, the first successful conqueror of Rajput independence, to this end his virtues were powerful alliance as by his skill in the analysis of the mind and its readiest stimulation to action. He was able to gird the chord with which he bound them. To these they became familiarised by habit especially when the throne exerted its power in acts gratifying to national vanity or even in ministering to the more ignoble passion. But generations of the martial races were cut off by his sword and lustre; rolled away ere his conquests were sufficiently confirmed to permit him to exercise the beneficence of his nature and obtain by the universal acclaim of the conquered the proud epithet of 'Jagat Guru' or Guardian of Mankind. He was long ranked with Shahab-ud-Din, Alam Din and other instruments of destruction and every just claim; and like these he constructed a number of (Seil) Pulpit or reading desks for the Koran from the altars of the Elkinga. Yet he finally succeeded in healing the wounds which his ambition had inflicted and received from millions that meed of praise which no other of his race ever obtained."

### **Rajput Policy of Akbar**

Akbar is famous for his Rajput policy, He opened a new chapter in this direction. The Rajputs were the leaders of the Hindus in the military field and they were well-known for their bravery. No wonder, Akbar, who wanted to found his Empire on the willing co-operation of the Hindus, decided to win over the Rajputs. Many Rajputs were taken into the Mughal service. Many were created Mansabdars. The **Jizya** was abolished. Pilgrimage tax was also abolished. Everything was done to remove the feeling among the Rajputs that they were being discriminated against. It was this policy of reconciliation towards the Hindus in general and the Rajputs in particular which enabled Akbar to conquer the whole of Northern India and a part of the Deccan.

In 1562, Akbar married the eldest daughter of Raja Bihar Mal of Jaipur. As a result of this marriage, Akbar took Raja Bhagwan Das and Man Singh into the Mughal service. Both of them occupied offices of trust and responsibility. They helped Akbar in many wars. They were entrusted with the most difficult jobs by him. In 1584, Akbar married Prince Salim to the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das. In 1570, he married Rajput princesses from Bikaner and Jaisalmer.

In this way, Akbar was able to win over most of the Rajput states in Rajputana. However, the state of Mewar defied the might of Akbar. Consequently Akbar had to march against Chittor. Rana Udai Singh left the defence of Chittor into the hands of Jaimal. There was a lengthy siege and in 1568, Chittor was captured. After the death of Udai Singh in 1572, Maharana Pratap became the ruler of Mewar. He continued an unequal struggle for a quarter of a century. In 1576, he was defeated in the Battle of Haldighati. In spite of this defeat, he continued the struggle and was ultimately

successful in recovering the whole of Mewar except Chittor, Ajmer and Mandalgarh. Maharana Pratap died in 1597. He was succeeded by Amar Singh, who continued the struggle against the Mughals even in the reign of Jahangir. It is to be noted that in his fight against Mewar Akbar was helped by Man Singh and other Rajput princes and generals. Thus, by a policy of conciliation, Akbar was able to win over the affection of the Rajputs and thereby solidify the foundations of the Mughal Empire in the country. It was the reversal of this policy in the time of Aurangzeb that proved to be undoing of his Empire.

### **Rajput policy v. Afghan policy**

It is interesting to compare the Rajput policy of Akbar with his treatment of the Afghans. Akbar was not in favour of putting an end to the ruler families of the Rajputs and an attempt was made to convert them into subordinate allies. Whenever a particular Rajput revolted or refused to submit, he was superseded by another member of his family who was friendly towards the Mughal empire. However, Akbar was more stiff towards the Afghans. It was only on a rare occasion that he allowed an Afghan prince to remain as a vassal. In Malwa, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa, the ruling Afghan families were deposed and their territories were annexed to the Mughal empire. The Afghan nobles were induced to submit by offering them high offices and jagirs.

The question has been asked as to why Akbar followed such a policy. The answer given is that the Rajputs were true to their word and if they once submitted they regarded rebellion or treachery as unworthy of their honour and family pride. On the other hand, the Afghans were selfish and could not be trusted with regard to their conduct in the future. They were liable to revolt at any time. Moreover, the Afghans had once possessed large territories from which they were dispossessed by the Mughals and it was difficult for them to be sincerely loyal to those who had dispossessed them. The Afghan policy of Akbar was bound to be different from that of his Rajput policy on account of the circumstances.

### **Akbar's Policy towards the Hindus**

Akbar must be given credit for initiating a new policy towards the Hindus.<sup>1</sup> It is true that there were certain factors which could have influenced his views but the fact remains that Akbar had already embarked upon a policy of reconciling the Hindus before he came in contact with those influences. The remarkable fact about his policy towards the Hindus was that he initiated the policy at a time

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1. According to G. B. Malleson, "Penetrated with the necessity of finding a system and recognising very gradually that such a system must be based on mutual respect and mutual toleration regarding the differences of race or religious traditions, on the union of interests, on making it absolutely clear that the fall of the keystone to the arch meant the fall of each stone which went to build up the arch, he sought during the first 20 years of his reign, discussion with his courtiers and the learned regarding the system which would best appeal to those sentiments in the conquered race which would convey to them confidence and conviction."

when there was too much of intolerance all around. The Muslim tradition in India was one of persecuting the Hindus and this had happened for centuries.

As regards the factors that could have influenced Akbar in his policy towards the Hindus, his Hindu wives must have played an important part. These Hindu wives were allowed to worship openly in their palaces and consequently similar toleration could be shown to the Hindus all over the country. Akbar himself listened to the teachings of the Hindu saints and philosophers. It is true that on previous occasions also Muslim rulers had married Hindu wives, but in those cases marriages had resulted in intolerance and fanaticism. However, in the case of Akbar, these marriages revolutionized the whole atmosphere.

Sheikh Mubarak, Abul Fazl and Faizi played an important part in the life of Akbar. They were Sufis and they encouraged Akbar to follow a liberal policy in matters of religion.

Akbar possessed an unusual amount of imagination and initiative. He possessed an adventurous mind and was prepared to make experiments in every field. It was his inquisitive mind that was responsible for the religious discussions in the Ibadat Khana at Fatehpur Sikri. As the discussions progressed, he was struck by the spirit of intolerance shown by the leaders of the various faiths. They, the Mullas, would call one another fool and heretic. "One pronounced a thing lawful, another would pronounce the very same thing unlawful." It was this intolerance that was responsible for Akbar's desire to find out the truth.

It is sometimes pointed out that Akbar followed a policy of reconciliation towards the Hindus on account of political reasons. Even if this fact is conceded, that does not take away from the greatness of Akbar. His great achievement was that he was able to liberate the Mughal state from the domination of the Mullas. It can be substantiated by chapter and verse that Akbar's policy towards the Hindus was intimately connected with his own religious views.

In 1564, Akbar abolished **Jizya** which was levied from the Hindus. This was hated by the Hindus because it was a symbol of their inferiority and involved a lot of humiliation. When **Jizya** was levied, the Muslims alone were the true citizens of the state, but after its abolition, both Hindus and Muslims became equal citizens of the state.

In 1563, Akbar abolished the pilgrimage tax. He was opposed to the policy of taxing people while they were performing their religious duties. All restrictions on the building of places of worship were removed. The result was that a large number of temples were built all over the country. Akbar set up a Translation Department for translating the religious books of the Hindus into Persian. Its object was to set up cultural contacts between the Hindus and the Muslims. The knowledge of Hinduism was expected to bring about a better understanding between the two religions. In 1603, a **Firman** was issued by which the Christians were allowed to make converts in

India. Even before this, Akbar had stopped the practice of converting the prisoners of war to Islam.

Up to the time of Akbar, the non-Muslims were excluded from all jobs of responsibility and prestige. The Muslims alone formed the governing classes and all high officials were drawn from the Muslim community. Akbar threw open doors of offices to Hindus and Muslims alike. Merit alone was made the test. Todar Mal was appointed Finance Minister and for some time he worked as Prime Minister also. Bhagwan Das, Man Singh, Todar Mal and Rai Singh were appointed the Governors of various provinces. They were also put in charge of many military expeditions. The *Ain-i Akbari* mentions 137 Mansabdars of 1,000 and above and out of them 14 were Hindus. A large number of Hindus were employed in the Mughal army. Out of the 12 provincial Diwans appointed in 1594-95, 8 were Hindus. Formerly, cases among the Hindus were decided by the Muslim Qazis. Akbar appointed Brahman judges to decide the cases of the Hindus. A very large number of Hindus were employed in the Revenue Department of the Mughal Government.

Akbar showed great respect for Hindu sentiments. As the Hindus had great sanctity for cows, the use of beef was forbidden. However it is wrong to say that the killers of cows were given capital punishment. In 1583, Akbar forbade the killing of animals on certain days. It is stated that in 1590-91, Akbar prohibited the eating of the flesh of oxen, buffaloes, goats or sheep, horses and camels. In 1592, fishing was prohibited for some time. According to Budauni, Akbar avoided garlic, onion, beef and association with people with beards. Akbar took part in the festivals of the Hindus. Some of those festivals were the Rakhi, Dipawali and Shivaratri. Their object was merely to conciliate the Hindus without offending the Muslims.

Akbar discouraged child marriage and encouraged widow re-marriage among the Hindus. He prohibited the custom of Sati or the burning of Hindu widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands. It is clear from above that Akbar deliberately followed a policy of conciliating the Hindus and thereby winning over their allegiance to his state. It is a matter of history that the reversal of this policy by Aurangzeb was one of the important causes of the downfall of the Mughal Empire.

### **Development of Akbar's Religious Views**

Akbar was not an orthodox Muslim of the rigid type. His religious views changed with the lapse of time. His Hindu wives and their relatives exercised a tremendous influence on him, His association with Hindu sages acted in a similar manner. In 1574, Shaikh Mubarak presented his son Faizi to Akbar. In 1674, he presented his younger son, Abul Fazl, to him, The father and the sons who were Sufis exercised great influence on Akbar in liberalizing his religious views. With their help, Akbar collected a big library of books on history, religion, philosophy and sciences. These books were read out and explained to him by Faizi who acted as the librarian. The result of these studies was that Akbar became a sceptic in religious matters. He began to find some good in every religion.

In 1575, a building known as the Ibadat-Khana or the House of Worship was specially constructed for discussions. Not only the exponents of Islam were invited, but those of Brahmanism, Jainism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism were also invited. Akbar addressed the following words to those assembled at the debates at the Ibadat-Khana : "My sole object, Oh Wise Mullahs! is to ascertain truth, to find out and disclose the principle of genuine religion, and to trace it to the divine origin. Take care, therefore, that through the influence of your human passions you are not induced to conceal the truth: and say nothing contrary to the Almighty decrees. If you do, you are responsible before God for the consequences of your impiety."

Shaikh Makhdum-ul-Mulk and Shaikh Abdunnabi were the leaders of the orthodox party and Shaikh Mubarak, Faizi and Abul Fazl represented the party of the free-thinkers. In spite of the best efforts of Akbar, the Mullas quarrelled among themselves and used abusive language against one another. Budauni refers to this fact in these words: "The learned men used to draw the sword of the tongue on the battlefield of mutual contradiction and opposition, and the antagonism of the sects reached such a pitch that they would call one another fools or heretics. The controversies used to pass beyond the differences of Sunni and Shia, of Hanafi and Shafi, of lawyer and divine, and they would attack the very basis of belief."

Reference may be made to the exponents of other religions invited by Akbar. The important Brahmans invited by him were Purshottam and Debi, Hira Vijaya Suri, Vijayasen Suri, Bhanuchandra, Upadhyaya and Jinachandra expounded the Jain faith to Akbar. Dastur Meherjee Rana expounded the Zoroastrian faith. Christian Fathers were invited from Goa to explain Christianity. Akbar also showed great regard for the Sikh Gurus.

Akbar was in favour of weakening the position of the Ulema. He would like to combine in himself both political and spiritual powers. He read the Khutba from the pulpit of a Fatehpur Mosque. The Khutba was prepared by Faizi and runs thus :

"In the name of Him who gave us sovereignty,  
Who gave us a wise heart and a strong arm,  
Who guided us in equity and justice,  
Who put away from our heart aught but equity :  
His praise is beyond the range of our thoughts  
Exalted be His Majesty—Allah-u-Akbar !"

### **Infallibility Decree (1579)**

At the suggestion of Shaikh Mubarak, Akbar decided to become Mujtahid. He was to act as the supreme arbiter in religious matters. In September, 1579, Shaikh Mubarak produced a document in his own handwriting which was drafted in such a way that Akbar became the supreme arbiter in civil and ecclesiastical matters. Akbar was to act as the Imam-i-Adil or the final interpreter of Muslim Law. This document was signed by Makhdum-ul-Mulk, Shaikh Abdunnabi, Shaikh Mubarak and others. Dr. Smith calls it the "infallibility decree." The following is the translation of the document which is

preserved in the text of Budauni and Nizam-ud-Din :—

“Whereas Hindustan has now become the centre of security and peace, and the land of justice and beneficence, a large number of people, especially learned men and lawyers, have immigrated and chosen this country for their home.

“Now we, the principal Ulema, who are not only well-versed in the several departments of the law and in the principles of jurisprudence, and well acquainted with the edicts which rest on reason or testimony, but are also known for our piety and honest intentions, have duly considered the deep meaning, first, of the verse of the Koran :—

“Obey God, and obey the Prophet, and those who have authority among you, and secondly, of the genuine tradition.

“Surely the man who is dearest to God on the day of judgment is the Imam-i-Adil ; whosoever obeys the Amir obeys Thee ; and whosoever rebels against him, rebels against Thee.

“And thirdly, of several other proofs based on reasoning or testimony : and we have agreed that the rank of Sultan-i-Adil is higher in the eyes of God than the rank of a Mujtahid.

“Further, we declare that the King of the Islam, Amir of the Faithful, Shadow of God in the world, Abul-Fath Jalal-ud-Din Muhammad Akbar, Padshah Ghazi (whose kingdom God perpetuate) is a most just, a most wise, and a most God-fearing king.

“Should, therefore, in future a religious question come up, regarding which the opinions of the Mujtahid are at variance, and His Majesty, in his penetrating understanding and clear wisdom be inclined to adopt, for the benefit of the nation and as a political expedient, any of the conflicting opinions which exist on that point and should issue a decree to that effect.

“We do hereby agree that such a decree shall be binding on us and the whole nation.

“Further, we declare that should His Majesty think fit to issue a new order, we and the nation shall likewise be bound by it : provided always, that **such order be not only in accordance with some verse of the Koran, but also of real benefit to the nation** ; and further, that any opposition on the part of his subjects to such an order passed by His Majesty shall involve damnation in the world to come and loss of property and religious privileges in this.

“This document has been written with honest intentions, for the glory of God and the propagation of the Islam, and is signed by us, the principal Ulama and lawyers, in the month of Rajab in the year nine hundred and eighty-seven (987).”

According to Dr. Smith, the above document “assured to Akbar, so far as any written instrument could have such effect, the utmost power that any man could claim to exercise within the limits of Islam.” The decree had no concern with any other religion. Although it purported to have been devised for the propagation of

the Muslim faith and to recognise the authority not only of the Koran, but of the genuine traditions of the Prophet, yet, as Budauni truly observes, "the superiority of the intellect of the Imam was established and opposition was rendered impossible."

According to Lane - Poole, "Akbar found that the rigid Muslims of the court were always casting in his teeth some absolute authority, a book, a tradition, a decision of canonical order and like Henry he resolved to cut **ground under ground**; he would himself be the head of church and there would be no Pope in India under Akbar."

According to Dr. Tripathi, "The need for such a declaration of policy was obvious so far as the Mussalmans of India were concerned. The Shias, Sunnis and Mahdavis had been frequently indulging in bloody conflicts, among themselves and the non-Muslims. The situation in Kashmir and Ahmednagar was particularly serious. Religious outbreaks resulting in considerable loss of life and property were not infrequent. Persecution of the followers of one creed by the other was the order of the day. There was no other appeal except that of the sword. The international situation of the Muslim world also called forth a clarification of the policy of the Mughal empire. The Shia kingdom of Persia and the Sunni states were at war more for religious than political reasons. The Shah of Persia claimed to be the leader of the Shias while the Ottoman Sultan of Turkey claimed Khilafat over the Muslim states particularly of the Sunnis. These warring states were anxious to know what policy the Mughal empire proposed to follow. The declaration of Akbar signed by some of the leading divines announced his policy in unambiguous terms to all concerned both in India and outside. The Mughal Emperor refused to identify himself with any creed and declared his determination to follow an independent policy of enlightened toleration within the ambit of the Qoran. Hadis and common agreements between the accredited divines. The spirit of Akbar's policy, in essence, is not different from that of Chengiz Khan, the idol of the Mughals, though the former was a Muslim and the latter a non-Muslim. The declaration was meant for the Muslims in particular and its application to the Hindus could be only incidental and indirect. It is entirely baseless to suggest that by this decree Akbar sought to free himself from the domination, legal or moral, of the Shah of Persia, as it simply did not exist."<sup>1</sup>

According to Principal Sri Ram Sharma, the nature of the documents has been misunderstood. "It gave Akbar no power until and unless the divines failed to agree. Even then he had the power to interpret the Muslim law and not to make it. It is necessary to remember that Akbar only gathered into his own hands powers and functions which had been so far exercised by a subordinate functionary, the Sadr. He did not create a new office, he brought an older one under imperial control. Even here Akbar differed from Aurangzeb. He assumed the right to be his own judge rather than dismiss a Sadr who criticized him

1. Tripathi, R. P. : *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, pp. 252-53.

—as Aurangzeb did—and appoint a successor who would give a convenient opinion. Akbar claimed to be infallible no more than the Privy Council or the House of Lords does. His interpretation of the laws was final, just as a ruling of the Privy Council is. Thus Akbar made no attempt to infallibility in any metaphysical sense. Still further his decision could not, and in fact did not silence opposition to his views. As an instrument for suppressing opposition it was valueless. Decision given under its authority would not convince those who did not recognize it as valid. It could be used effectively only by Akbar himself for justifying his own personal practices. The main planks of his policy of toleration had already been laid. The **Jizya** had been abolished, the pilgrimage tax remitted, the Hindus admitted to public services, and public religious worship by other faiths tolerated long before the issue of this so-called 'Infallibility Decree.' These departures from the accepted orthodox policy had not necessitated any artificial support. The decree was only a manifestation of Akbar's anxiety to be considered a good Muslim. Budauni's statement that after the **Fatwa** the distinction as hitherto understood between the lawful and the unlawful was obliterated, can have reference to Akbar's personal actions alone. No orders of his could force his people to adopt as lawful modes of action which they considered unlawful. It was thus not a decree, much less an infallibility decree. All that it really effected was to take away from the theologians the right to persecute others for their opinions. Akbar did not claim to define the religious beliefs of his subjects and force his definition on them as the Tudor 'Governor of the Church' was claiming to do at this time in England. Not one was persecuted for belief in his own faith. Akbar issued no 'Thirty-nine' Articles, nor did he enforce an 'Act of Uniformity.'

According to Dr. A. L. Srivastava, "This document has been misnamed the Infallibility Decree. It has also been erroneously contended that the promulgation of the decree made Akbar 'pope as well as king' The Mahzar conferred upon Akbar a two-fold right or authority. The emperor was empowered to accept any one of the conflicting interpretations of the Muslim jurists or Mujtahids on a controversial question. His choice was final and the Muslim public as well as the Ulema were bound to obey him and carry out his precept. He did become a Mujtahid in a limited sense only or one eligible to form his independent opinion on a controversial question. Secondly, Akbar was authorised to promulgate a new order or law provided that it was in conformity with a verse of the Quran. The decree no doubt conferred on Akbar wide powers and discretion, but it did not make him a Mujtahid, in its original sense, much less the supreme head of the Muslim religion. It deprived the Ulema of the authority to decide religious questions and to advise the emperor on matters of his private life and those relating to the administration of the country, religious or secular." (*Akbar, the Great*, Vol. I, p. 243).

As was to be expected, the orthodox Muslims detested the

issuing of the so-called infallibility decree. Akbar was misunderstood and it was believed that he had rejected Islam, Prophet, Quran, tradition and all. Abul Fazl explains the situation in these words: "An impure faction reproached the caravan-leader of God knowers with beings of the Hindu (Brahman) religion. The ground for this improper notion was that the prince out of his wide tolerance received Hindu sages into his intimacy, and increased for administrative reasons the ranks of Hindus, and for the good of the country showed them kindness. Three things supported the evil-minded gossips. First, the sages of different religions assembled at court, and as every religion had some good in it, each received some praise. From a spirit of justice, the badness of any sect could not wave a veil over its merits. Second, the reason of 'Peace with all' (Sulh Kul) was honoured at the court of the Caliphate and various tribes of mankind of various natures obtained spiritual and material success. Third, the evil nature and crooked ways of the base ones of an age."

### **Din-i-Ilahi (1581)**

The next stage in the development of the religious views of Akbar came in 1581 when he promulgated the Din-i-Ilahi, or Tauhid-i-Ilahi. The object of the Din-i-Ilahi was to establish a national religion which would be acceptable to the Muslims and the Hindus. According to Abul Fazl, Akbar became the spiritual guide of the nation and saw in the performance of that duty, a means of pleasing God. He tried to satisfy the thirst of the people for truth. A ceremony for initiation into the new faith was prescribed. That ceremony is described by Abul Fazl in these words: "When a novice bears on his forehead the sign of earnestness of purpose, and he be daily inquiring more and more, His Majesty accepts him, and admits him on a Sunday, when the world-illuminating sun is in its highest splendour. Notwithstanding every strictness and reluctance shown by His Majesty in admitting novices, there are many thousand men of all classes, who have cast over their shoulders the mantle of belief, and look upon their conversion to the New Faith as the means of obtaining every blessing."

"At the above-mentioned time of everlasting auspiciousness, the novice with his turban in his hands, puts his head on the feet of His Majesty. This is symbolical, and expresses that the novice, guided by good fortune and assistance of his good star, has cast from his head conceit and selfishness, the root of so many evils, offers his heart in worship, and now comes to inquire as to the means of obtaining everlasting life. His Majesty, the chosen one of God, then stretches out the hand of favour, raises up the suppliant, and replaces the turban on his head, meaning by these symbolical actions that he has raised up a man of pure intentions who from seeming existence has not entered into life. His Majesty then gives the novice the Shast, upon which is engraved "the Great Name" and His Majesty's symbolical motto, "Allah-u-Akbar". This teaches the novice the truth that the Shast and the pure sight never err."

Some of the ceremonials of the Din-i-Ilahi are mentioned by Abdul Fazl in the **Ain-i-Akbari**. To quote Abdul Fazl, "The members of the Divine Faith, on seeing each other, observe the following custom. One says, 'Allah-u-Akbar' and the other responds, 'Jalla Jalaluhu'. The motive of His Majesty in laying down this mode of salutation is to remind men to think of the origin of their existence, and to keep the Deity in fresh, lively, and grateful remembrance.

"It is also ordered by His Majesty that, instead of the dinner usually given in remembrance of a man after death, each member should prepare a dinner during his lifetime, and thus gather provisions for his last journey.

"Each member is to give a party on the anniversary of his birthday and arrange a sumptuous feast. He is to bestow alms and thus prepare provisions for the long journey.

"His Majesty has also ordered that members should endeavour to abstain from eating flesh. They may allow others to eat flesh without touching it themselves; but during the month of their birth they are not even to approach meat. Nor shall members go near anything that they have themselves slain, nor eat of it. Neither shall they make use of the same vessels with butcher, fishers, and bird-catchers.

"Members should not cohabit with pregnant, old, and barren women; nor with girls under the age of puberty." Again, "If any of the Darsaniyyah disciples died, whether man or woman, they should have some uncooked grains and a burnt brick round the neck of the corpse, and throw it into the river, and then they should take out the corpse, and burn it at a place where no water was.

"But this order is based upon a fundamental rule which His Majesty indicated, but which I cannot here mention.

"People should be with their heads towards the east, and their feet towards the west. His Majesty even commenced to sleep in this position."

There were four grades of the followers of the Din-i-Ilahi. Those four grades entailed in readiness to sacrifice to the Emperor property, life, honour and religion. Whoever sacrificed these four things possessed the four degrees and whoever sacrificed one of the four, possessed only one degree.

The number of the followers of the Din-i-Ilahi was not large. That was partly due to the fact that Akbar was not a missionary. He was not prepared to use force or pressure to convert people to the new faith. Raja Bhagwan Das and Man Singh refused to join and Akbar did not press them. Birbal was the only Hindu who joined the new faith. The number of the followers of the Din-i-Ilahi was not large even in the time of Akbar and after his death the new faith disappeared completely.

Budauni tells us that after the promulgation of the Din-i-Ilahi, Akbar issued many ordinances against Islam. He forbade Islamic prayers. He disallowed the call to prayer or Azan. He stopped Muslim fasts. **Sijdah** was to be offered to kings. The use of beef was prohibited. The wearing of beards was discouraged. The use of the flesh of the tiger and wild bear was allowed. Boys were not to be married before the age of 16 and the girls before the age of 14. Circumcision before the age of 12 was disallowed. The wearing of silk dresses and ornaments was made compulsory at the time of prayers. Pilgrimages to Mecca were disallowed. Muslim festivals were discontinued. The names containing the name of the Prophet were disallowed. Mosques and prayer rooms were converted into stables and given to Hindu Chowkidars. Akbar plundered mosques when he was in need of money. Shaving of beards was allowed. Akbar razed to the ground towers built for Muslim call to prayer. The mosques were not required and thus allowed to fall. Mullahs and Shaikhs were exiled. The study of Arabic was discouraged.

Much reliance cannot be placed on the views of Budauni. Most of his information was based on hearsay. He wrote against Akbar because he himself was dissatisfied with his promotion. He was jealous of the rise of Abul Fazl and wrote all that he could against Akbar. It was the sense of frustration that made him the bitter enemy of Akbar and his friends. He was that type of an orthodox Muslim who believed that all non-Muslims were condemned to eternal hell. When he mentioned the name of a Hindu, he boiled with anger. He called Birbal a bastard and the Shias as heretics, fools, worshippers of the devils, fit only to be cast out. No value can be attached to the testimony of such a person.

According to Dr. Smith, the organization of the adherents of the Din-i-Ilahi was that of an Order rather than of a church. The creed, so far as there was one, inculcated monotheism with a tinge of pantheism; the practical deification of the emperor as the viceregent of God, filled with special grace; and the adoration of the sun, with subsidiary veneration of fire and artificial lights. The whole scheme was the outcome of ridiculous vanity, a monstrous growth of unrestrained autocracy. Its ignominious failure illustrated the wisdom of the protest addressed by the Kotwal to the Sultan of Delhi some three centuries earlier, and the folly of kings who seek to assume the role of prophets.

“The Divine Faith was a monument of Akbar’s folly, not of his wisdom. His actions throughout his reign exhibited many illustrations of both qualities.”

The view of Dr. Ishwari Prasad is that the Din-i-Ilahi “was an eclectic pantheism containing the good points of all religions—a combination of mysticism, philosophy and nature-worship. Its basis was rational; it upheld no dogma, recognised no gods or prophets, and emperor was its chief exponent.”

According to Principal Sri Ram Sharma, it is a gross exaggeration to give the Din-i-Ilahi “the rank of a religion. It had no book,

no priests, no ceremonies, and practically no religious beliefs. It was an order rather than a religion and more akin to free masonry than any religious movement."

Von Noer says : "Budauni certainly takes every opportunity to raking up the notion of Akbar's apotheosis for the purpose of renewing attacks upon the great emperor. He, however, was never in intimate relation to the Din-i-Ilahi ; he repeats the misconceptions current among the populace marred and alloyed by popular modes of preception. Akbar might justly have contemplated the acts of his reign with legitimate pride, but many incidents of his life prove him to have been among the most modest of men. It was the people who made a God of the man who was the founder and head of an order at once political, philosophic and religious. One of his creations will assure to him for all time a pre-eminent place among the benefactors of humanity—greatness and universal tolerance in matters of religious belief."

According to S. R. Sharma, the Din-i-Ilahi was "the crowning expression of the emperor's national idealism." He condemns the Anglo-Indian historians in these words : "Being keenly disappointed in their expectation of converting the emperor, these European missionaries became too prone to give credence to statements discrediting Akbar. To cite Budauni in confirmation of the Jesuits is only to call in two prejudiced witnesses instead of one. A fair judge ought to make sure especially before coming to the consideration that the witnesses themselves are above suspicion." According to the same writer, "The Din-i-Ilahi was nothing more than a tentative experiment in the process of fundamental synthesis. It was never forced upon any man ..... Like the Krori system in the fiscal administration, this 'Esperanto of Religion' was simply allowed to lapse, when the essentially practical Akbar realised its futility."

According to Havell, "Akbar has shared the fate of all great reformers in having his personal character assailed, his motives impugned, his action distorted, upon evidence which hardly bears judicial examination. He was neither an ascetic nor a saint of the conventional type, but few of the great rulers of the earth can show better record for deeds of righteousness or more honourably and consistently maintained their ideals of religious life devoted to service of the humanity. In the western sense his mission was political rather than religious, but for his endeavours to make the highest religious principles the motive power of State policy he won an imperishable name in Indian history and lifted the political ethics of Islam into a higher plane than they had ever reached before."

"It does not detract from his greatness as a man and ruler that his achievements fall short of his ideals, that the Din-i-Ilahi did not accomplish the spiritual regeneration of the ruling classes or wiped off the State all the records of the previous centuries of misgovernment and that his schemes did not embrace the full recognition of the Aryan system of self-government upon which the

economic strength and political greatness of India stood firmer longer than has been the case with any other empire in the world."

According to Lawrence Binyon, "Those who have seen in it merely self-aggrandisement and astuteness surely misread Akbar's character. The religion which was to have united all, pleased none. Moreover, such is the weakness of human nature. Akbar who had revolted so often from the intolerance of his ancestors now imposed his own toleration by invidious ordinances against Muhammedan practices. Just as the champions of international goodwill are often found to exempt their own country from a universal benevolence and look on it alone with a malignant eye, so this descendant of the conqueror who had treated all alien creeds with fierce contempt was unraked into oppressing all the faiths, the faith in which he was bred." Binyon goes on to say that Akbar was lacking in the genius of religious leadership but failure should not make us forget his sublime and ultimate aim of the unification of the empire. He is right when he says that the new faith was a failure and was destined to be a failure, because he observes that "in religious societies toleration is no virtue, it is the despised offspring of lukewarmness or difference. A creed so simple was obvious to the approach of vagueness and emptiness."

According to Lane-Poole, 'Of course an eclectic religion never takes hold of the people and Akbar's curiously interesting hotch potch of philosophy, mysticism and nature worship practically died with him. But the broad-minded sympathy which inspired such a vision of catholicity left a lasting impression upon a land of warring creeds and tribes and for a brief while created a nation where there had only been factions.' He further says that Akbar was very keen on making experiments. He has given one very curious instance when Akbar separated young children from their parents and locked them in a room cut off from all outside influence. After a lapse of five years to his surprise he found all of them dumb, and his experiment an utter failure. Dr. Holden supports Lane-Poole when he says: "Akbar experimented in all departments from religion to metallurgy."

According to Malleon, Akbar's one foremost aim was the union of Hindustan under one head which was difficult to achieve had he persecuted all non-Islamic religions. In order to bring about unity, Akbar was fully convinced that "the dominant religion should not be, as long as he was its interpreter, the religion of the sword. It should carry, on the contrary, a healing influence throughout India, should wipe away reminiscence, should practise the most perfect toleration. To accomplish such a union, it was necessary, first, to conquer, secondly, to respect all consciences and all methods of worshipping the Almighty. To carry out this plan he availed himself to a modified extent only of a Muhammadan ritual."

According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "With the aid of his advisers he had concocted an eclectic creed likely as his vanity persuaded him to command an assent from all men which neither Christianity nor Islam had been able to ensure."

According to Dr. Tripathi, the Din-i-Ilahi was not a religion and Akbar never intended the establishment of a church. The Din-i-Ilahi came into existence on account of the desire of Akbar to bring together men who were willing to submit to his spiritual guidance and infuse into them his own catholic spirit and principles of action. Akbar had no intention to perpetuate an order by nominating his spiritual successor or requiring others to initiate men on his behalf and propagate it. The Din-i-Ilahi was entirely a personal matter, not between the Emperor and the subjects but between Akbar and those who regarded him as their Pir or Guru. With the death of Akbar, the personal tie disappeared. The political significance of Din-i-Ilahi is not great as the number of his followers was only a few thousand in a population of many millions. However, the Din-i-Ilahi brought into existence a group of men who vowed allegiance to Akbar and were bound to him by personal ties. The Din-i-Ilahi set an example that in spite of social, political and religious differences, people could meet on a common platform and unite for God and the King. The Din-i-Ilahi must have strengthened the hands of Akbar by adding a spiritual halo around his throne. It is wrong to say that the Din-i-Ilahi was used by Akbar to train officers of a school of thought and then send them to the various provinces to propagate the Din-i-Ilahi. The ideas of Akbar in this field inspired two generations of his descendants. Prince Khusró and Prince Dara belonged to his school of thought.

According to Dr. A. L. Srivastava, "Opinion is sharply divided regarding the nature of the Din-i-Ilahi. European writers, contemporary and modern, have called it a religion. The historian Badauni is of the same view. The court biographer Abul Fazl is silent on the point. Almost all modern Indian writers are of the opinion that Din-i-Ilahi was not a religion and that Akbar never intended to establish a church. It is difficult to say what Akbar's real motive was and what he would have done if he had attained real initial success in this enterprise. There is no doubt that Akbar believed that he was possessed of spiritual gifts superior to those of an average saint, Hindu, Muslim or Christian. He set himself up as a religious guide and tried to heal diseases, cure sickness, and the vows made to him by suppliants. He looked upon himself as good as a prophet of God. Nevertheless, though probably originally intended to be a full-fledged national religion, the Din-i-Ilahi remained from its inception a kind of socio-religious-cum-political brotherhood. It had no religious scripture or book, no defined and uniform prayer, no temple or fixed place of worship, and no clergy. It aimed at bringing together enlightened and liberal-minded Indians, who looked upon Akbar as their spiritual as well as political leader and who believed in the essential truth of all religions and could come together on one common platform. It is doubtful if the Din-i-Ilahi served any useful political purpose, for its membership did not exceed a few thousands, and with the exception of Birbal, all members were Muslims. Badauni says that Akbar was keen to have notable Hindus in its fold and that he frowned upon

Muslims who expressed a genuine desire to enrol themselves. This hope was, however, not fulfilled, for such notable Hindus as Bhagwan Das, Man Singh and Todar Mal declined to join it. Nevertheless, it became one of the powerful factors that fostered a strong sense of loyalty to the crown by casting around it a halo of greatness and spirituality. The order was not formally dissolved, but it practically ceased to exist after the death of Akbar." (**Akbar, the Great**, Vol. I., pp. 310-11).

Mr. Justice Shelat points out that Din-i-Ilahi was, by no means, a new religion or a new sect. At the most, it was an order whose purpose perhaps was veneration for its author. So far as Akbar was concerned, it was an "earnest and intense endeavour in search of a formula which would satisfy all but hurt none and contain all that was good and true and beautiful in the great faiths of the world." What precisely was the new order is difficult to define. Barring a few references to it in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, there is meagre information about its beliefs and practices in contemporary literature. It might well be that Akbar's desire was that his person should be the symbol of the unity he sought to build up amongst his subjects. Like many other autocrats of that century, he believed that a King was the shadow of God but the order that he tried to establish cannot, in any sense, be called a religion. It had no holy books, no priests, no ceremonies and no religious dogmas or beliefs. Mirza Jani's declaration was no more than a statement of his total loyalty to the King even to the extent of subordinating his religion. Besides Mirza Jani, there were other liberal-minded Muslims also who felt disgusted with the rapacity and avarice of the orthodox priesthood. Azam Khan Kokah, a staunch Muslim, was offended at first by Akbar's innovations. For a time he refused to attend the court even when invited. But his pilgrimage to Mecca where he was subjected to religious harassment by the orthodox, made such an impression on his mind that on his return, he acknowledged Abul Fazl as his spiritual guide and became the disciple of Akbar. In all probability, Akbar had in mind the removal of those conditions in the empire under which an ecclesiastic like Mulla Mahomad Yazdi could fan the fire of fanaticism against his authority. In short, Akbar wanted to rally round him a number of adherents who would place loyalty to the throne even above honour, property, life and religion. The obvious refutation of the allegation that Akbar founded a new religion is found in the fact that even after 1583, he continued to have religious discussions, patronise leaders of all faiths and summon two more Jesuit Missions from Goa. (Akbar, pp. 257-58).

### **Akbar's Religion**

According to Dr. Smith and Blochmann, Akbar totally gave up Islam. This view is also accepted by Sir Wolseley Haig. According to Beveridge, "He never divested himself of his early religious beliefs" but he was a sceptic. According to Noer, the religion of Akbar was a sort of "Parsi-Sufi-Hinduism" and Akbar wanted to overthrow the supremacy of Islam. According to Muhammad Husain Azad, whatever Akbar did was due to politi-

cal considerations and although some of his innovations contravened the principles of Islam, he was not a heretic. Shibli Namain does not consider Akbar as a hater of Islam or a heretic. According to him, the conduct of Akbar was always in harmony with that of the pious Khalifas. It is true that the Jesuit Fathers state that Akbar gave up Islam and they also refer to the rumours current among the people, it cannot be denied that Akbar lived and died as a Muslim. This view is also confirmed by his son Jahangir. It is true that Akbar did not identify himself with any particular school of law and thought among the Muslims, but that does not mean that he gave up Islam. In his days, an average Muslim thought of Islam in terms of Shia, Sunni, Hanafi, Hambali, Maliki, etc. It is only a few persons among the Muslims who could rise above the narrow view and could follow their own bent of mind. Akbar may not have been a good Muslim in the eyes of the orthodox Muslims but that does not mean that he had given up his belief in Islam. There is no substance in the accusations of those who say that he persecuted the pious Muslims on account of their religious views. The truth is that he had to punish a few Muslims who were responsible for creating trouble in the Eastern provinces and the Punjab. Out of malice, Badauni has exaggerated the matter and described it as if it was a religious persecution. The accounts of the Jesuit Fathers are biased as they wanted to claim credit for themselves for having won over Akbar to their point of view. It is rightly stated that the charge of giving up Islam by Akbar cannot stand a critical examination.

As regards the religious views of Akbar, he believed in the indivisibility of life. The religious and secular aspects of life could not be separated. Whatever was done by man he was responsible to God for that. Man could not escape from the over-vigilant and all-penetrating eye of God. Akbar was always trying to know the will of God and he always tried to follow the same. He believed that whatever he did was an act of dedication to God.

Akbar also believed that absolute truth was not a monopoly of any religion. This view was expressed in the following paragraph by Abul Fazl on a temple in Kashmir :

"O, God in every temple I see people that seek Thee, and in every language I hear spoken, people praise Thee  
Polytheism and Islam feel after Thee  
Each religion says, "Thou art one, without equal  
If it be a mosque, people murmur the holy prayers  
and if it be a Christian church, people ring the bell from love to Thee.  
Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister,  
and sometimes the mosque.  
But it is Thou whom I search from temple to temple.  
Thy elect have no dealings with Kufr and orthodoxy for neither of them stands behind the curtain of Thy Islam (truth).

Heresy to the heretic, and religion (Din) to  
the orthodox,  
But the dust of rose petal belongs to the  
heart of the perfume-seller."

The same thing was put down in these words by Lord Tennyson in "Akbar's Dream":

"I can but lift the torch  
Of Reason in the dusky cave of Life,  
And gaze on this great miracle, the World,  
Adoring That who made, and makes, and is,  
And is not, what I gaze on—all else, Form,  
Ritual, varying with the tribes of men."

### **Akbar's Land Revenue System**

It goes without saying that Sher Shah Sur was the forerunner of Akbar in the field of land revenue system. Sher Shah laid down the main principles which were followed later on in the time of Akbar. Sher Shah had fixed the state demand at one-third of the produce and made regulations for the equitable collection of land revenue. Sher Shah's system was adopted by Akbar with the necessary alterations. Sher Shah's regime was too short to stabilize the system. Akbar's long reign gave him ample opportunity to plan out, develop and perfect his system.

Early efforts were made under Khwaja Abdul Majid Khan and Muzaffar Turbati to reform the revenue system. Turbati appointed 10 Qanungoes to collect the data about land revenue matters. The Qanungoes made certain recommendations. However, those could not be adopted on account of the Uzbek rebellion. In 1575, the Jagirs were abolished. The whole of the Empire at that time was divided into 182 Parganas and each Pargana was put under a Karori whose function was to collect revenue. These Karories turned out to be greedy and corrupt officers.

In 1582, Raja Todar Mal<sup>1</sup> became the Diwan-i-Ashraf or Diwan-in-Chief. The whole of the land revenue system was thoroughly over-hauled. The prevailing system at that time was to fix assessments every year on the basis of the yield and prices. The result was that the demand of the state varied from year to year. The collectors could not proceed with their work of collection of revenue until the officers fixed the rates to be charged. Todar Mal made a change in the existing system. He got an aggregate of the rates of collection for 10 years from 1570 to

1. According to Lane-Poole, "There is no name in medieval history more renowned in India to the present day than that of Todar Mal and the reason is that nothing in Akbar's reforms touched the welfare of the people than the great financial reconstruction of the revenue system." Abul Fazl praises the Raja for his courage, bravery, loyalty, honesty and freedom from avarice. To quote him, "In fulness of courage, absence of avarice..... in the performance of service, in diligence and in skill, he was a man who is seldom seen or rather he was incomparable." He was probably the best and the ablest officer in the service of Akbar.

1580 and one-third of them was taken as the basis of assessment. The survey or Paimaish of the whole land was undertaken. Formerly, hempen-ropes were used to measure land. The difficulty with them was that they were liable to contract and expand and that resulted in faulty measurement. Todar Mal used a Jarib of bamboos which was joined together with iron-rings.

Land was divided into 4 classes. **Polaj** land was that land which was regularly cultivated and yielded revenue from year to year. **Parauti** land was that land which was occasionally left uncultivated so that it may regain its productive capacity during the interval. **Chachhar** land was that land which was left uncultivated for 3 or 4 years. **Banjar** land was that land which was left uncultivated for 5 or more years.

The **Polaj** and **Parauti** lands were divided into three grades, viz., good, middling and bad. The average of three was taken as the basis of the assessment. One-third of it was fixed as the share of the state. The system can be illustrated in this way. Suppose, the yield from land is as follows :

1. Good land	..	..	50	mds.	per	Bigha
2. Middling land	..	..	50	"	"	"
3. Bad land	..	..	30	"	"	"
Total	..	..	120	"	"	"
Average	..	..	40	"	"	"

The share of the state was  $13\frac{1}{3}$  mds.

It is to be noted that a different system was followed in the case of Banjar and Chachhar lands. The share of the state was not fixed at one-third. The share increased by progressive stages.

Todar Mal fixed rates of converting revenue in kind into revenue in cash by taking an average of the actual prices for 10 years. The share of the state was fixed at one-third. It was not to fluctuate from year to year. The farmer was given the choice to pay either in cash or in kind. Cash rates were fixed by the state officers and they were different in the case of different crops. Rates of sugarcane and indigo were different from the rates for barley and wheat.

When the harvest season arrived, a staff of officers toured the villages to ascertain the exact area of land under cultivation with a view to preparing the crop-statement. The area of each crop in each holding was measured and the Bitikchi applied the prescribed rates and calculated the revenue from the cultivators.

The chief characteristics of Todar Mal **Bandobast** were that the state was to advance loans to the cultivators which could be paid in easy annual instalments. Remissions of revenue were granted in bad seasons. The revenue collectors were required to write officially annual reports about the work, character and

integrity of their subordinates. They were to see that cultivators were given a receipt for every payment made by them. A record of all the holdings and liabilities of every cultivator was to be maintained. The collectors were to send reports of monthly returns to the royal treasury. Voluntary payments by cultivators were encouraged and the state force was employed only as a last resort. All the Parganas, whether cultivated or not, were required to be measured. Accounts were to be kept in Persian and not in Hindi.

The system described above was known as the Zabti system. It was prevalent in Bihar, Allahabad, Lahore, Multan, Delhi, Agra, Oudh, Malwa and parts of Gujarat. Although the ideal administrative system was to be found in the Zabti system, there were other systems of assessment prevalent in various parts of the Mughal Empire. The Ghalla Baksha system was the old Indian system of assessment by the division of crops. It prevailed in Thatta and in parts of Kabul and Kashmir. In the case of the Nasaq system, there was no intermediary between the farmer and the state.

According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, "The collection of revenue was always the result of a struggle between the Ryot and the Sarkar and the arrears were seldom, if ever cleared." There were conflicts between the farmers and the collectors of revenue. That was partly due to the fact that the Indian peasants were required to pay to a remote urban state from which they derived practically no benefit and about whose continuity they were sceptical. According to Sir J. N. Sarkar, the collectors of revenue got from the peasants under the name of never-to-be-extinguished arrears everything except their bare subsistence.

### Revenue Staff

Reference may be made to the revenue officers of the Government. The Mughal Government did not give the right of collecting land-revenue to the highest bidders. It employed agencies for revenue collection. The **Amil** was assisted by Bitikchi, Potdar, Qanungo, Muqaddam and Patwari. The Amil had to perform many kinds of duties. He severely dealt with those who were rebellious even if that involved the land remaining uncultivated. He was required to ascertain the quality of the land actually under cultivation and reclaim the waste lands. He was to take security from the surveyors of land, assessors and other officials. He was to see that in measuring land, not even a Bigha was concealed or over-looked. The revenue was to be collected in such a way that peasants were least troubled. The treasurer was required not to demand an extra coin from the peasant. The Amil was required to examine the registers maintained by the Patwaris, Muqaddams and Karkoons. He was required to report if anything exceptional affecting agriculture happened within his jurisdiction.

The **Bitikchi** occupied a status similar to that of the Amil. His duty was to supervise the work of the Qanungoes. He was required to be an efficient accountant and a good writer. He was to be well-

acquainted with the customary laws of the areas within his jurisdiction. He was to maintain a register of all the engagements entered into by the peasants with the Government. He prepared detailed statements of arable and waste land and also of income and expenditure. He had to prepare every season abstracts of land revenue and also submit an annual report to the Central Government.

The **Potdar** or **Khizandar** received money from cultivators and issued receipts for all payments. The **Qanungo** was a Pargana Officer. He was acquainted with all rural customs and rites of the peasantry.<sup>1</sup> His salary varied from Rs. 20 to 25. According to Moreland, one rupee of the Mughal period bought as much as seven rupees today.

Each Pargana was divided into many villages and each village had a Muqaddam or headman and a Patwari. The function of the Muqaddam was to help in the collection of revenue.

The revenue system of Akbar worked successfully and was responsible for improving the lot of the peasants. As the share of the state was fixed, the chances of fraud on the part of the Government servants were lessened. As the demand of the state was fixed, the Government became sure of a fixed revenue. Peasants got the security of tenure and were saved from all types of exactions. Agriculture improved and the necessities of life became cheap. Akbar's system with minor alterations continued to exist in the time of his successors.

According to Dr. Tripathi, although the assessments of Akbar were not severe, those were not light also. In spite of that, Akbar has been regarded as the father of the people for centuries. That is due to the fact that he gave the people of India a revenue system which was not only permanent but was also understood by the people. As the demand of the State was fixed, there was no occasion for any suspense or doubt. He also relieved peasants of a large number of petty and vexatious taxes and cesses. Akbar not only abolished **Jizya**, **Zakat**, and pilgrim taxes, but also abolished taxes on sale of cattle, oxen, salt markets, turbans, lodgings, hides, oils, blankets, weighing, purchase and sale of houses, permission to reap harvest etc. He also stopped the charging of fees by Tahsildars, Daroghas, Treasurers and money-testers. All these remissions must have brought relief to the people. Whenever there was famine or other natural calamity, the Government came to the rescue of the people. The peasant must have welcomed the policy of saving the cows, buffaloes, camels and oxen and the maintaining of pastures. The peasants were saved from the caprices and whims of the Zamindars and Jagirdars.

1. According to Sir J.N. Sarkar, the Qanungo was "a walking dictionary of the prevailing rules and practices and a store-house of information as to procedure and precedents in the land history of the past." He was to keep a record of the landed property of every villager and the amount of tax paid by him. He was to report to the authorities the names of heirs succeeding a villager.

Reference may be made to the reforms made by Akbar in the field of Sayurghals. It was considered to be the duty of the State to help the learned scholars, persons engaged in spiritual pursuits, the indigents, widows, decrepits and other respectable men who had no employment. Large areas of land had been given by the earlier rulers to such persons in the form of **Madadi-maash**. These persons prayed for the prosperity of the rulers and sometimes also actively worked for them. Mahmud Khilji of Malwa used to say that it was not possible to conquer Gujarat as it had one army for day and another for night. The Mughals also made similar grants of land. A separate Department of the State was entrusted with this work and it was presided over by the Sadr. In the beginning of the reign of Akbar, the department of the Sadr enjoyed a lot of discretion and the Sadr did whatever he pleased. When Shaikh Gadai was the Sadr, he took away jagirs from the Afghans and gave the same to his own favourites. When Shaikh Abdunnabi became the Sadr in 1565, he was asked to examine the question of Sayurghals and redistribute them with the help of the Finance Minister. To begin with, he confiscated many jagirs which were given to the Afghans and transferred them to the Crown lands. Later on, he gave large areas of lands in the form of **waqfs**, and **idrarat**.

In 1575, the Karoris were asked to make enquiries into the Sayurghals and not to recognize any grant unless the same was countersigned by the Sadr. The result was that all the grantees of land had to come to Agra for that purpose. There was a rush of work on the Department of Sadr and Abdunnabi did not do the work properly. He left the work of checking in the hands of his subordinates who were corrupt. The result was that many honest persons suffered. An enquiry was made into the matter and it was found that the distribution of land had been made in a very haphazard manner. While many persons had large tracts of land, there were other deserving persons who had got nothing. Moreover, as a result of the mixing up of the Crown jagirs and Sayurghal lands, there were constant quarrels between the officials and the holders of Sayurghals. Some persons held lands at different places by means of fraud.

Under the circumstances, Akbar ordered that lands for Sayurghal purposes should be set apart in every Pargana and no person should be allowed to have lands at different places. Abdunnabi was removed from his office. To reduce pressure at the centre, one Sadr was appointed for the Punjab and another for Gujarat. Akbar himself examined the cases of the holders of Sayurghals. He personally fixed up the areas of land to be given to each grantee on the basis of the impression created by him when he met him. However, he was generous to old men. In 1580, when the empire was divided into many provinces, a Sadr was appointed for each province. At the centre, one Sadr-i-Sadr was appointed.

Akbar has been criticized for his Sayurghal policy. It is pointed out that the object of Akbar was to destroy the power of

the Sadr who had become very powerful. However, such a view seems to be baseless. The Sadr was appointed by the King and could be dismissed by him at any time. Hence, there is no substance in the view that the object of Akbar's policy was merely to weaken the power of Sadr. Moreover, Akbar gained nothing by his Sayurghal policy. His object was merely to see that lands were distributed in such a way among the pious people that all the deserving people got something. Moreover, he also wanted to remove the quarrels between the holders of Sayurghals and the officials of the State.

### **The Mansabdari System**

The Mansabdari system of the Mughals was the basis of civil and military administration of the country. The system was introduced by Akbar who borrowed it from Persia. It differed fundamentally from the feudal system of Europe in the sense that it had nothing to do with land and was also not hereditary. The Mansabdari system provided the Mughals with a civil service.

The literal meaning of the word Mansab or Mansëb is office, rank or dignity. According to Irvine, the object of the Mansabdari system was to settle precedence and fix gradation of pay. Mansabdars belonged both to the civil and military departments. As a matter of fact, there was no distinction between the two departments in the Mughal period. Officials were transferred from the civil side to the military department and vice versa. The word Mansabdar was generally restricted to those who were high officials and the title of Rouzindar was given to the inferior Government servants.

There were many grades of the Mansabdars, but their main division was into two parts. The one part was known as the Omrahs and the other ordinary Mansabdars. Those Mansabdars who held the rank of one Hazari or two Hazari or any higher rank upto 12,000 were known as the Omrahs. Those who held a rank lower than that of 1,000 but not below 20, were called Mansabdars. That is why Bernier stated that Mansabdars were inferior Omrahs.

There is a difference of opinion among the various writers with regard to the distinction between Omrahs and Mansabdars. According to Bernier, there was distinction between Omrahs and Mansabdars and no Omrah was less than one Hazari. Sir Thomas Roe does not refer to any distinction between the two. Manucci seems to make a distinction between the two. The reason is that when he discusses the smaller Mansabdars up to 900 horses, he simply uses the words "Do Bisti", "Ce Bisti", "Chahar Bisti" etc. However, when he refers to Mansabdars of 1,000 or more, he also uses the word "Omrahs" along with them. Thus, the holder of 1,000 horses is called by him by the name of "Yak Hazari Omrah". Manucci also tells us that offices up to 900 were given to Mansabdars, but it was difficult to get the rank of a Hazari. The king granted that rank very sparingly and that also to those who worked hard for it. However, those who got the rank of a Hazari, also got the title of "Omrah".

Hawkins says that the rank of the captain varied from 2,000 to 20,000 horses. The rank of 12,000 was given to the king, his mother, eldest son and one more member of the royal blood. Other Mansabdars were known as Dukes, Marquesses, Earls, Viscounts, Barons, Knights, Esquires, Gentlemen and Yeomen. According to Tavernier, the least of these Omrahs commanded 2,000 horses. There is every possibility of Tavernier being confused as he wrote his account much later.

The number of the Mansabdars was greater than that of the Omrahs. Although their pay was less, they belonged to the same class as Omrahs, and performed duties similar to those of the Omrahs. The Mansabdars were to be found not only at the court but also in the army and in the provinces.

Bernier says that the number of the Mansabdars was not fixed, but according to Hawkins, those who held the rank from 2,000 to 20,000 horses, numbered, 2,950. At the time of the writing of the *Ain-i-Akbari*, there were 143 Omrahs of 500 and above. Their number rose to 439 under Jahangir. The number was 405 in 1637 and 446 in 1647. The total number of Mansabdars was 1,658 in 1590, 2,069 under Jahangir, 8,000 in 1637 and 11,456 in 1690.

### **Zat and Sawar**

A distinction has to be made between Zat and Sawar ranks of the Mansabdars. However, scholars are not unanimous on this point. The view of Blochman was that the word Zat indicated the number of troops which a Mansabdar was expected to maintain, while Sawar indicated the actual number of horses under the command of a Mansabdar. If a Mansabdar held the rank of 1,000 Zat and 500 Sawar, then he had a rank of 1,000, while he actually commanded 500 horses. The view of Irvine was that the Sawar rank had nothing to do with the actual number normally commanded by an officer. It was an honour and it merely pointed out the actual number of horses over and above those of the Zat.

The view of Dr. Tripathi is that the Sawar rank implied an additional honour but there was no obligation on the part of a Mansabdar to maintain the number of horsemen indicated by it. However, he was paid an extra allowance for that. The view of S.K. Rao is that the Zat rank of a Mansabdar indicated the number of infantry while the Swar rank indicated the number of cavalry under him. The view of Abdul Aziz and S.K. Sharma is that the Zat rank imposed an obligation on a Mansabdar to maintain a fixed number of elephants, horses, beasts of burden and carts, but no horsemen or cavalry. However, the Sawar rank represented the actual number of cavalry under a Mansabdar.

Dr. A.L. Srivastava says: "Blochman's interpretation seems to approximate to the actual state of affairs as it existed after the institution of the Sawar rank. It appears that for several years after the establishment of the Mansabdari System, Mansabdars of various ranks failed to maintain and bring to muster the number of cavalry fixed for their several ranks. Moreover, the bringing together of horses, horsemen (cavalry), elephants, camels, oxen, etc.,

in each rank caused confusion. It was probably to put an end to this confusion and to secure an absolute compliance of the number of horsemen fixed for each rank that Akbar instituted the Sawar rank, as distinct from Zat rank. Thereafter, the Zat rank indicated the number of horses, elephants, beasts of burden and carts required to be maintained by a Mansabdar, but not horsemen or cavalry. The Zat rank was not a personal rank as has been wrongly supposed by modern scholars. The Sawar rank, on the other hand, indicated the actual number of horsemen to be maintained by a Mansabdar in Akbar's reign. Under his successors, this regulation became a little lax and the number of horsemen fell below the Sawar rank."

There were three classes of the Mansabdars. A Mansabdar belonged to the first class if his Zat and Sawar ranks were equal. He belonged to the second class if the Sawar rank was half of his Zat rank. He belonged to the third class if his Sawar rank was less than half the Zat rank or there was no Sawar rank at all.

The institution of Do-Aspa and Si-Aspa was introduced in the reign of Jahangir. This was different from the Sawar rank. It is difficult to say what exactly was the meaning of the rank of two horses and three horses. According to Abdul Aziz, "It was a very rare rank which was granted to a rare Mansabdar. The holders of these ranks were required to maintain some additional horsemen under them and they were paid a special allowance for that."

According to Bernier, the Omrahs were "the pillars of the Empire." They enjoyed the highest honours and occupied the most prominent position in the army, provinces and at the court. Their salary was proportionate to the number of horses assigned to each. They maintained a lot of outward pomp and show. They were never out of doors but in the most superb dresses. Sometimes, they mounted an elephant, sometimes on horseback and very often in their palanquins. They were usually attended by many horsemen and servants on foot who went in front of them. They presented themselves before the king thrice a day. When the king went on an excursion in a palanquin, they were bound to accompany him on horseback. They were forced to make presents to the king on the occasion of certain annual festivals.

Pelsaert says: "Their (Mansabdars) Mahals are adorned internally with lascivious sensuality, wanton and reckless festivity; superfluous pomp, inflated pride and an ornamental daintiness.

"I shall speak of the houses which are built here. They are noble and pleasant, with many apartments, but there is not much in the way of an upper storey except a flat roof on which to enjoy the evening air. There are usually gardens and tanks inside the house; and in the hot weather the tanks are filled daily with fresh water drawn by oxen from wells. The water is drawn or sometimes raised by a wheel in such quantity that it flows through a leaden pipe and rises like a recreation unknown in our cold country. These houses last for a few years only because the walls are built with mud instead of mortar, but the white plaster of the

walls is very noteworthy and far superior to anything in our country. They use unslaked lime which is mixed with milk, gum and sugar into a thin paste. When the walls have been plastered with lime, they apply this paste rubbing it with well-designed towels until it is smooth; then they polish it steadily with agates, perhaps for a whole day, until it is dry and hard and shines like alabaster or can even be used as a looking glass.

"They have no furniture of the kind we delight in, such as tables, stocks, benches, cupboards, bedsteads, etc., but their cots or sleeping places and other furniture of kinds unknown in our country, are lavishly ornamented with gold or silver, and they use more gold and silver in serving food than we do, though nearly all of it is used in the Mahal, and is seen scarcely by anybody except women. Outside the Mahal, there is only the Diwan Khana or sitting place which is spread with handsome carpets and kept very clean and neat. Here the Lord takes his seat in the morning to attend his business, whatsoever it is and here all his subordinates come to Salam him."

According to Mandelslo, "There is no king in Europe that has so noble a court as the Governor of Gujarat nor any that appears in public with greater magnificence." According to Manucci, Daud Khan spent Rs. 25,000 a year on his pet birds alone, Islam Khan Governor of Bengal in the time of Jahangir, spent Rs. one lakh on dancing girls alone.

It is pointed out that the Mughal Mansabdars were paid very high salaries if we take into account the fact that living was very cheap in those days. Thus, Mansabdars spent their money on their own luxuries and patronising all sorts of studies and arts. Some of the nobles received a pension on retirement. It is stated that Mohammad Yar Khan, Governor of Delhi, resigned in 1702 and was given a pension of Rs. 3,000 a year. Arz Khan, the Faujdar, was given a pension of Rs. 4,000 a year.

According to Bernier, the Omrahs were not expected to maintain the number of horses which was fixed by their titles. It was the duty of the king to fix the effective number of horsemen which any Omrah was to maintain. It did not matter much whether a Mansabdar was one of 2,000 or 7,000. Bernier's master, Danishmand Khan, was an Omrah of 5,000 horses, but as a matter of fact he maintained only 500 horses. According to Manucci, the king allowed the Omrahs to keep not more than one quarter of the number indicated by their title. Thus, if the title was that of 1,000 and the Mansabdar got pay for 1,000, he was to maintain only 250 horses. According to Irvine, Lutfullah Khan held the rank of 7,000 but he did not maintain even 7 asses, much less horses or riders of horses. If the king wanted to show favour to a Mansabdar, he could give him a high title and allow him to maintain a smaller number of horsemen. If he wanted to punish him he would give him a smaller title and ask him to maintain a large number of horsemen. This was done by Aurangzeb in the case of nobles of Bijapur and Golconda whom he wanted to punish.

Sir Thomas Roe also agrees with the view that the number of horses kept by Omrahs was less than what their title indicated. Mir Jamal-ud-Din Hussain, Governor of Patna, was a Pancha-Hazari Mansabdar but he maintained only 1,500 horses.

There were two methods of making payments to the nobles. One was of giving them Jagirs wherefrom they got their salaries. The second method was that of cash payment. In this case the Mansabdar got his salary from the royal treasury. The jagir from which the Mansabdar was to get his salary may be in the neighbourhood of the place where a Mansabdar was posted. It was never to be at the place where he was employed. The object of this regulation was to lessen the chances of corruption and extortion.

Nobles were paid at the rate of Rs. 25 for every horse per month. Sir Thomas Roe fixes the amount of £ 25 annually. According to Hawkins, the Mansabdars were allowed Rs. 20 for every horse every month. They were paid Rs. 2 per horse for the maintenance of their stables.

There was no hereditary nobility among the Mughals. Everything depended upon the will of the king who had absolute control over the whole Mansabdari system. The appointment and advancement of a Mansabdar depended entirely on the will of the Emperor. To quote Bernier, "The Mughal raises them to dignities or degrades them to obscurity, according to his own pleasure and caprice." It was not necessary for a Mansabdar to pass through all the stages in order to become a high Mansabdar. A person could be appointed directly a Mansabdar of 5,000 if the king so wished. He could be given a lift of 2,000 at once if the Emperor so pleased. The same person could have been appointed a Mansabdar of 200 and allowed to progress by slow degrees.

All the Mansabdars did not necessarily come from the nobility as such. Such a class could not come into existence. Most of the Omrahs were adventurers from different countries and were generally persons of low descent. If any one wanted to rise, he was to go up by degrees and that also as a result of hard efforts. No person could claim a particular Mansab on account of his birth. The son of a Mansabdar of 5,000 did not succeed to his father as a Mansabdar of 5,000.

Dr. Satis Chandra says : "Like most ruling groups, the nobility of the Mughals was to some extent self-perpetuating, so that the son of a nobleman found it easier to enter the service of the king than an outsider. But it was not a closed corporation. The Mughal Emperors regarded nobility of birth as an important qualification, but merit and learning were even more important, and men of humble origin could and did rise to the highest offices. Even writers, professional artists, and lower administrative officials were sometimes granted Mansabs. Apart from the Rajputs, a smaller number of zamindars belonging to different areas such as the Bundelas, hill Rajas, Jats etc. also found admission to the ranks of the Mansabdars. Generally speaking, all entrants, irrespective of their ancestry, had

to work their way up from the lower grades, promotion depending mainly on merit. It was thus very different from a typical tribal or territorial aristocracy (*i.e.*, the zamindars), and the hereditary feudal nobility of Medieval Europe where the son automatically succeeded the father in his titles, rank, possession and sometimes even the office." (**Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707—1740**, p. xxvii).

A reference may be made to what is known as the law of **escheat**. According to this law, when a Mansabdar died, all his property was confiscated by the King.<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Roe puts this in the form of a metaphor. According to him all the property of a Mansabdar came "to the king like rivers to the sea."

It is difficult to say as to what exactly was left by the king for the dependents of the deceased Mansabdars. According to Manucci, the king "seized everything left by his generals, officers and other officials at their death." Only a trifle was given to their widows for their maintenance. According to Bernier, the king usually gave a small pension to the widow and also some allowance to the family. According to Tavernier, the king inherited the property of the Mansabdar and his wife got jewels. According to Hawkins, the king got possession of the property of the Mansabdars after their death and gave to their children whatever he pleased. "Commonly, he dealeth well with them." The children were given certain favours, especially the eldest son. However, this remark does not tally with the statement of Bernier that after the death of an Omrah, his sons and grandsons were generally reduced to beggary and were compelled to enlist themselves as mere troopers in the cavalry of some Omrah. According to Sir Thomas Roe, the king left to the sons of the Mansabdars their "horses, stuff and some stock." He gave them a small lift for advancement. It was up to the children of a Mansabdar to secure their advancement by any means they could.

It cannot be denied that the working of the law of escheat must have enriched the king because he came to have a lot of money from this source. The law of escheat must have created a good effect on the conduct of the Mansabdars while in office. Since they knew that whatever money was extorted from the innocent people, would not pass to their children and thereby make their lives comfortable, they desisted from temptations of bribery and other acts of highhandedness. However, there is every reason to believe that this law must have resulted in extravagance on the part of Mansabdars. As the Mansabdars knew that they could not leave anything to their children and whatever was left behind them, would be confiscated by the king, there was a ten-

1. According to J. N. Sarkar, "Thus the military accounts could never be cleansed and no officer's exact duties and liabilities to the state could be ascertained in life-time and even after his death. Under the circumstances, the safest course for the emperor was to escheat the dead man's property immediately after his death and then think of settling his account with the Government treasury."

dency to become reckless in expenditure. The result was that in certain cases, nothing was found after the death of a Mansabdar. According to Manucci, when a Mansabdar died and his belongings were collected, nothing was found but boxes full of horns and old shoes. This gives an inkling into the working of the minds of the Mansabdars.

According to J. N. Sarkar, "It (the law of escheat) made the Mughal nobility a selfish band, prompt in deserting to the winning side in every war of succession or foreign invasion because they knew that their lands and even personal property were not legally assured to them but depended solely on the pleasure of the king *de facto*." Again, "Thus generation after generation, an Islamic country witnessed the same process of building up fortunes from the smallest beginning and undoing of life's work at death by the confiscation of the private property of the deceased man to the state and reduction of his son in the rank of poor commoners."

The Mansabdari system worked with great efficiency in the time of Akbar. Every effort was made to make the system as efficient as possible. The number of the Mansabdars was small. However, as time passed on, the number of Mansabdars rose and great care was not taken at the time of their appointment. A large number of Mansabdars were created in the time of Jahangir when he was busy in his war in the Deccan. The system completely deteriorated during the Deccan wars of Aurangzeb which lasted for a quarter of a century. The system collapsed after the death of Aurangzeb.

Dr. Satish Chandra points out that "at the end of Aurangzeb's reign, the Mughal empire was faced with a serious situation. The financial position had grown steadily worse and, as a result of this and a number of other developments, the crisis of the Jagirdari system had reached a stage when the entire Mansabdari system was threatened with collapse. The spirit of obscurantism and revivalism had grown both among the Muslims and Hindus: the efforts to create a composite ruling class had suffered a set-back and separatist forces had been strengthened. The rebellions of the Jats, Sikhs, etc., the breach with the Rathors, and the prolonged conflict with the Marathas had damaged imperial prestige, and encouraged the forces of opposition in all quarters. Ambitious men were attempting to gather strength in their hands in order to strike out on their own should the situation warrant it. Thus, the general atmosphere was one of expectancy and uncertainty." **Party and Politics at the Mughal Court**, pp. xlvii-xlviii).

### Reforms of Akbar

Reference may be made to some of the reforms of Akbar.

- (1) He abolished the pilgrim Tax in 1563 with a view to winning over the good-will of the Hindus. The Muslims opposed this act of the Emperor on the ground that it involved a huge loss to the royal treasury. Another argument was that as the Hindus had been paying the tax for a long time, the same was not inequit-

able. "An old tax is no tax." Moreover, it was a tax on the "superstitions of the people." Akbar preferred to lose annually a sum of Rs. one crore in order to win over the goodwill of the Hindus.

(2) The next reform was the abolition of **Jizya** which was a tax on the "conscientious faith of any man." This measure went a long way in removing the deep-rooted bitterness in the minds of the Hindus against the Muslim rulers.

(3) Akbar tried to remove the custom of Sati from the Hindus in general and the Rajputs in particular. Special inspectors were appointed to keep a watch on the voluntary or forced Sati. No woman was to be burnt against her will (1590-91).

(4) Akbar discouraged child-marriages and the system of female infanticide. A law was made that no boy below the age of 16 and no girl below the age of 14 was to be married. Consent of the bride and bridegroom was made necessary for the performance of a marriage. By another law, it was provided that no son or daughter of a nobleman could be married without the ascertainment of their age by an official of the police. Two officers called Turbegs were appointed in big towns to inquire into the circumstances of the bride and bridegroom. The Emperor took a tax from both the parties according to their status. He disapproved the system of high dowries. He also condemned polygamy on the ground that it ruined the health, happiness and tranquillity of mind of a person. Voluntary intercommunal marriages were encouraged. If a Hindu was converted to Islam in his childhood, he was given the option to become a Hindu again if he so desired.

(5) Akbar abolished the system of the enslavement of the wives and children of the conquered people. All persons in India were to be free.

(6) Certain regulations were made for the branding of horses<sup>1</sup>. Horses belonging to the state were branded with the royal mark or number. Thus, the Chera and Dagh system of Ala-ud-Din Khilji was reintroduced. The horses belonging to different stables were distinguished by their price in numerals. A new mark was stamped if the horses were enlisted into higher grades. These reforms created resentment among the nobles as they could not resort to the practice of fraudulent musters.

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1. Badaoni has explained the law called Dagh-u-Mahall in these words : "It was settled that every Amir should commence as a commander of twenty (Bisti) and be ready with his followers to mount guard, carry messages etc. as had been ordered ; and when according to the rule he had brought the horses of twenty troopers to be branded, he was then to be made a commander of 100 (cadi) or of more. They were likewise to keep elephants, horses and camels in proportion to their command (mansab) according to the same rule. When they had brought to the muster their new contingent complete, they were to be promoted according to their merits and circumstances to the post of commander of 1,000 (Hazari) or 2,000 (Du Hazari) or even of 5,000 (Panj Hazari) which is the highest command, but if they did not do well at the musters, they were to be degraded."

(7) The Jagir system was abolished and all Jagirs were converted into Crown lands. The state became the owner of those lands and collected the revenues directly. The officers were to be paid salaries.

(8) Mir Arz was appointed to receive petitions from the public and submit them to the Emperor.

(9) Trial by ordeal was abolished.

(10) A record office was set up and the proceedings of the court were to be recorded.

(11) Important changes were made in the organisation of the royal mint. Abdul Samad was appointed the mint master. Different officials were put in charge of the provincial mints of Bengal, Lahore, Jaunpur, Gujarat and Patna. Pure gold was used for coins and those were of a standard weight. Dr. Smith praised the coinage of Akbar in these words : "Akbar deserves high credit for the excellence of his extremely barred coinage as regards purity of metal and fulness of weight and artistic execution. The Mughal coinage, compared with that of Queen Elizabeth or other contemporary sovereigns in Europe, must be pronounced far superior on the whole. Akbar and his successors seem never to have yielded to the temptation of debasing the coinage in either weight or purity."

### **Akbar and the Jesuits**

It has rightly been stated that "To the Jesuits, Akbar was at first an encouragement, then an enigma and ultimately a bitter disappointment."

The Portuguese were the first European Power with which Akbar came into contact in 1572 at Cambay. They were given certain trade concessions on the condition that they did not molest the Muslim pilgrims to Mecca.

When Akbar was searching for truth, he decided to ask the Christians to teach him the fundamentals of their religion. For that, he called first of all Father Julian Pereria, the Vicar General at Satgaon and Pietro Tavares, the commandant of the port of Hooghly, but he did not get any satisfaction.

In 1579, Akbar requested the Archbishop of Goa to send two learned priests to acquaint him with the principles of Christianity. At first, the sincerity of the request was doubted but ultimately it was decided to send a mission. The members of the mission were cordially welcomed and everything was done to make their stay happy and comfortable. They were invited to take part in the discussions going on at the Ibadat Khana. The Jesuit Fathers were happy at the prospect of converting Akbar. One of them sent the following report to Goa : "The Emperor is not a Muhammadan, but is doubtful as to all forms of faith and holds finally that there is no divinely accredited form of faith, because he finds in all something to offend his reason and intelligence. Nevertheless, he admits at times that no faith commends itself so much to him as that of the Gospel and that when a man goes

so far as to believe this to be true he is near to adopting it. At the court, some say he is a heathen and adores the Sun, others that he is a Christian, others that he intends to form new sect. Among the people also, there are various opinions regarding the Emperor, some holding him to be a Christian, others a heathen, others a Muhammedan **The more intelligent consider him to be neither a Christian, nor a heathen, nor a Muhammedan and hold this to be truest or they think him to be a Moham-medan who outwardly conforms to all religions to obtain popularity."**

Father Monserrate puts the following statement into the mouth of Akbar: "These things are in the hands of God, who grants to those who ask plain paths from which they cannot stray. I myself have no desire. I reckon wives, children, empire of no account. If there is no other way of becoming a Christian without raising a tumult, I will pretend that I wish to go on pilgrimage to Mecca and will go to Goa to be baptized." Again, "You have proved your case entirely to my satisfaction and I am well pleased with the religion contained in your law, but I should advise you to be cautious in speed and action for your opponents are unscrupulous villains." The reply of the Fathers was in these words: "We will be cautious as regards the Muslim religious leaders as you advise, not because we are afraid of them for ourselves, but because we wish to obey you."

The Jesuit Fathers were very hopeful to convert Akbar to Christianity and they concentrated all their attention on that objective. However, they failed in their mission and were recalled in 1583. The Muslims resented the condemnation of Islam by the Jesuit Fathers. Akbar found them as fanatical as the Muslim Mullas. Akbar's numerous wives took up the cudgels against Christianity. They were joined by his mother Hamida Banu and his aunt, Gulbadan Begum.

The second Jesuit Mission was sent to the Court of Akbar in 1590. Although its members were welcomed and a school was started to teach Murad and Daniyal, sons of Akbar, the Portuguese language and the principles of Christianity, it was felt that there were no prospects of converting the Emperor. Thus the second mission was also a failure. According to Smith, "No printed record explains how, why or when exactly the mission came to an abrupt conclusion. Its members were recalled and they returned to Goa some time in 1592. The suspicion seems justifiable that the Fathers selected were not in all respects suited for the task entrusted to them and that they might have been somewhat faint-hearted."

In 1594, Akbar asked for another mission to be sent. To begin with, there was a lot of hesitation and opposition on account of the previous attitude of the Mughal Emperor, but ultimately, the Viceroy decided to send the mission in the hope of obtaining "good results not merely of a religious but also of a political character." The members of the mission were received well as is

attested by one of them in these words : "Both Emperor and Prince (Salim) favoured us and treated us with much kindness, and I observed that he paid to none of his own people as much attention as he paid to us, for he desired us to sit in turn upon the cushion which he and the prince alone are wont to sit."

The missionaries were given all kinds of facilities to propagate their faith. But this third mission was a failure in the sense that Akbar was not converted to Christianity. There was a lot of opposition from various quarters and ultimately the mission had to leave.

All the three missions of the Jesuits were failures. They did not realise that the object of Akbar was merely to understand the fundamentals of Christianity in the same way as he was trying to know about other religions. He had no intention to adopt one religion or the other. The Jesuits should not have been upset if they failed to convert the Emperor to Christianity. They ought to have remembered the kindness and courtesy shown to them and not condemned Akbar in every possible way simply because he did not become a Christian. They ought to have desisted from spreading all kinds of foolish stories about the Emperor in which there was absolutely no substance of truth. The following is merely a sample of the falsehoods propagated by these missionaries: "The Emperor turned all the mosques of the city into stables for elephants or horses on the pretence of preparation for war. The subdeacon also said that the name of Mohammed was as hated at the Mughal Court as in Christendom and that the Emperor had restricted himself to one wife, turning out the rest and distributing them among his courtiers." Obviously, no reliance can be placed on the writings of the Jesuit Fathers for purposes of writing history. Dr. Smith did great disservice to the memory and fame of Akbar by relying upon their testimony for his biography of the real founder of the Mughal empire in India.

### **The Parsees**

Dr. Smith is of the view that Akbar probably found more satisfaction in the religion of the Parsees than in any other. Dastur Meherjee Rana of Nausari initiated Akbar into the mysteries of the Parsi religion in 1578-79. After his death in 1591, Dastur Meherjee Rana was succeeded by his son at the royal court. He was given a Jagir of 200 Bighas of land which was later on increased by one-half. From 1580, Akbar publicly prostrated before the sun and fire. It became the practice of the whole court to rise respectfully when the lamps were lighted in the evening... Badauni tells us that Akbar gave an order that the dead bodies should be buried with their heads towards the East from where the sun rises. Akbar even began to sleep in that position.

### **The Jains**

Dr. Hirananda Shastri is of the view that "The evidence available would show that Akbar learnt the **Surya-sahasranama** from a Jaina teacher of his..... The list given by Abul Fazl names three Jaina **gurus** for whom the great Mughal had very high regard.

The Hiravijaya Kavyam shows that the stoppage of animal slaughter was due to the teaching of Hiravijaya Suri on whom Akbar had conferred the grand title of **Jagad-guru** or the Preceptor of the World. The Adisvara temple on the holy hill of Satrunjaya near Palitana in Kathiawar has a long Sanskrit inscription written on its walls which combines the praise of this Jaina monk with that of Akbar and may well be referred to for knowing what the Great Mughal did under the noble influence of the Jaina saints. Vincent Smith has rightly remarked that 'Akbar's action in abstaining almost wholly from eating meat and in issuing stringent prohibitions resembling those of Asoka restricting to the narrowest limits the destruction of life, certainly was taken in obedience to the doctrine of his Jain teachers.' The colophon of the commentary on the Kadambari would show that Akbar read the Suryasahasra-nama with Bhanuchandra whom Hiravijaya Suri had left behind after his famous visit to Akbar. Siddhichandra, the joint author of the said commentary, and a disciple of Bhanuchandra, was another teacher of the Great Mughal."

### Birbal

Birbal was one of the nine jewels of Akbar and probably he wielded greater influence on Akbar than even Abul Fazl. He rose from the ranks on account of his natural gift, tact and devotion to the king. His original name was Mahesh Das and he was born in about 1528. He was a Brahman by caste and he started his life as an ordinary versifier. It is stated that before coming to Akbar, he had spent some time in the service of Raja Ram Chandra of Bhatha and also at the court of Amber. It is true that he did not possess high education but he possessed an enormous gift of wit and humour. In the art of conversation, storytelling and repartee, he excelled all. He was a poet of repute. Many stories and anecdotes are attributed to him. He was given the title of Kavirai, i.e., poet Laureate of Hindi. He was also given the title of Raja. A jagir was given to him in Bundelkhand. He was also given the rank of Mansab of 2,000.

In 1583, he was put in charge of administration of justice at the royal court. His duty was to receive petitions, scrutinise them and introduce suitors for justice to the Emperor. He was also in charge of purchase and sale of certain commodities. He was employed on various missions to the courts of Hindu Rajas. He was sent to fight against the Yusuf Zais but he was killed in 1586 while fighting against them. It is said that the news of his death plunged Akbar into grief. Abdul Fazl says: "The deaths of loyal servants and especially the death of Raja Birbal, his spiritual companion, aggrieved him (Akbar) exceedingly and his heart turned from everything.....For two days and nights, he did not take his daily food and drink." Badauni says: "Akbar never experienced such grief at the death of any Amir as he did at that of Birbal." Akbar used to say: "Alas! that they could not bring his body out of that defile, that it might have

been committed to the flames." Akbar condemned Hakim Abul Fateh and Zain Khan for what he called their betrayal to Birbal.

Birbal was the only important Hindu who joined the Din-i-Ilahi. He was a worshipper of the sun and that was probably the reason why Akbar also showed great reverence to the sun. It cannot be denied that Birbal exercised a tremendous influence on the life and thought of Akbar in favour of Hinduism. Birbal was known for his generosity and he gave away a lot of money to poets.

### **Todar Mal**

Todar Mal belonged to a Khatri family of Uttar Pradesh. He started his career under Shershah Sur. After the fall of the Sur dynasty, he joined in the service of Akbar as an ordinary clerk. By 1562, he became an important officer. His rise was rapid. In 1572, he was appointed the Diwan of the newly conquered province of Gujarat. He did his work so efficiently that he was promoted to the post of Wazir. In 1582, he was appointed Prime Minister.

Todar Mal was not merely a civilian, he was also a good soldier and a general. He fought many battles and was also employed on several diplomatic missions. He worked as first assistant in command to Munim Khan in the various fields of battle in Bengal. In 1589, he died. About Todar Mal, Abul Fazl writes thus: "He was the unique of the age for uprightness, straightforwardness, courage, knowledge of affairs and the administration of India. If he had not had bigotry, conventionalism and spite and had not stuck to his own opinions, he would have been one, the spiritually great. A wound was given to the disinterested work (by his death) and the market of business lost its briskness." Todar Mal was unsurpassed by the best of the imperial officials, nobles and generals.

Mr. Justice Shelat points out that Todar Mal had the sagacity and foresight to see the unifying effect of a common language for the entire administration. With that end in view, he made Persian the language of all records compelling the Hindu officers who held most of the subordinate posts in towns and villages to learn and adopt that language as their own. What has immortalised Todar Mal is the system of revenue assessment and land survey which he evolved, a system which drew an equitable balance between the demands of the State and the needs of the subject. Though the Mughal dynasty died out, the system he introduced remained and was followed both by the Marathas and in a large degree by the British. (*Akbar*, p. 281).

### **Bhagwan Das**

Raja Bhagwan Dass was the son of Raja Bhar Mal of Amber. His sister was married to Akbar. He was a constant companion and friend of Akbar from 1562 to 1589 when he died. He took an important part in many battles from Gujarat to Kabul and Kashmir. He risked his life at Paraunkha and Sarnal. It was on account of his ability and devotion to duty that he was made Mansabdar of 5,000. He was also given the title of Amir-ul-Umra.

He was next only to the Prime Minister. For some years, he was the Governor of Lahore. When Akbar went to Kashmir, he was put in charge of the Central administration along with Todar Mal and Qulij Khan. Akbar was so very unhappy over his death that he sent a letter of condolence to Man Singh and also sent his son Salim for condolence to Amber.

Bhagwan Das was one of the most trusted nobles of the Mughal Empire. According to Abul Fazl, "Bhagwan Das was endowed with uprightness, weight of counsel and courage."

### **Abul Fazl**

Abul Fazl was born in 1550. He was the son of Shaikh Mubarak. He started his career as a Mansabdar of 20 and by dint of honesty and devotion to duty, he attained the rank of 5,000. For a long time, he was the principal Secretary of Akbar. He was famous for his learning. His knowledge of literature, history and philosophy was profound. He was a thinker and a writer of brilliant style. There were not many who were prepared to compete with him in literary and religious disputations. His writings were considered as models of diction and eloquence to follow but difficult to imitate. He was known for his wit and repartee. He was free from religious bigotry and his critics went to the extent of saying that he was a Hindu or a Parsee or an atheist. As a matter of fact, he believed in the principle of peace with all. As a historian, his style was involved. He praised Akbar too much. **Akbar Nama** and **Ain-i-Akbari** are the two monuments of his fame. He took a lot of pain to write these books.

For some time, Abul Fazl was the Governor of Khandesh in 1600. In 1599-1600, he got a chance to show his talent as a soldier, an organizer and a captain in the Deccan. He proved himself as a successful diplomat. His influence over Akbar was very great. He was called by the Jesuits as the "King's Jonathan". When he was murdered in 1602 by Bir Singh Bundela at the instigation of Prince Salim, Akbar was so much shocked that he did not appear in public for three days and he never forgave Salim for his sin. The writer of the supplement to **Akbar Nama** observes thus about the death of Abul Fazl: "Alas for that mine of wisdom and woe for that ocean of knowledge! The night lamp of science and wisdom was extinguished and the fountain of eloquence and excellence was stilled."

### **Character and achievements of Akbar**

A study of the **Ain-i-Akbari** and the **Akbarnama** of Abul Fazl and **Tuzk-i-Jahangiri** of Jahangir and the accounts of the foreigners give us an idea of the personality of Akbar. According to Jahangir, "In his august personal appearance, he (Akbar) was of middle height but inclining to be tall; he was of the hue of the wheat; his eyes and eyebrows were black and his complexion rather dark than fair; he was lion-bodied with a broad chest and hands and arms long. On the left side of his nose, he had a fleshly mole, very agreeable in appearance, of the size of half a pea.

Those skilled in the science of physiognomy considered the mole a sign of great prosperity and exceedingly good fortune. His august voice was very loud and in speaking and explaining had a peculiar richness. In his actions and movements, he was not like the people of the world, and the glory of God manifested itself in him.

"The good qualities of my revered father are beyond limit of approval and the bounds of praise. If books were composed with his commendable dispositions without suspicion of extravagance and he be not looked at as a father would be by his son, even then but a little out of much could be said."

According to a Jesuit Father, "Indeed he was a great king ; for he knew that the good ruler is he who can command, simultaneously, the obedience, the respect, the love, and the fear of his subjects. He was a prince beloved of all, firm with the great, kind to those of low estate, and just to all men, high and low, neighbour or stranger, Christian, Soracen, or Gentile ; so that every man believed that the King was on his side. He lived in the fear of God, to whom he never failed to pray four times daily, at sunrise, at sunset, at midday and at midnight, and, despite his many duties, his prayers, on these four occasions, which were of considerable duration, were never curtailed. Towards his fellow-men he was kind, and forbearing, averse from talking life, and quick to show mercy. Hence it was that he decreed that if he condemned anyone to death, the sentence was not to be carried into effect until the receipt of his third order. He was always glad to pardon an offender if just grounds for doing so could be shown."<sup>1</sup>

According to Father Monserrate who knew Akbar closely, "He was in face and stature fit for the dignity of king, so that anybody, even at the first glance, could easily recognise him as the king. His shoulders were broad and his legs slightly bandy and adapted to riding. His complexion was fair, but slightly suffused with a darker tint. He carried his head slightly inclined to one side, towards the right shoulder ; his brow was broad and open and his eye sparkled as does the sea when lighted by the sun. His eye-lids were heavy as those of Sarmatians, the Chinese, the Nipponians, and nearly all Asiatics of the more Northern regions. His eyebrows were narrow, and his nose was of the middle size and drooping, but had a high bridge. His nostrils were expanded as though he were enraged and on the left one he had a wart, which met the upper lip. He shaved his beard but not his moustache, following the custom of young Turks before they assumed the full costume of manhood. Unlike his forefathers, he did not shave his head nor did he wear a cap, but bound his hair with a turban, which, they say, he did in imitation of the Indian custom in order to conciliate them. He dragged his left leg slightly, as though he were lame in it, though he had not

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 154-155.

been injured in the foot. He has in his body, which is very well-made and neither thin and meagre nor fat and gross, much courage and strength. When he laughs, he is distorted, but when he is tranquil and serene, he has a noble mind and great dignity. In his wrath, he is majestic." Akbar possessed an attractive personality. He was bold and courageous. He had so much physical strength that he could cut off the neck of a lion with one stroke of his sword. He worked very hard and slept very little. He was fond of sports all his life. He was witty. Although illiterate, he managed to learn a lot on account of his sharp memory and earnestness to acquire knowledge. He was a broad-minded person and he alone could follow a policy of Sulh-kul or universal toleration. He was not a bigoted person.

He was sympathetic towards the people and was always ready to do all that he could to win over their affection. "He always found time gladly to hear their cases and to respond graciously to their requests. Their little offerings, too, he used to accept with such a pleased look, handling them and putting them on his bosom, as he did not do with the most lavish gifts of the nobles, which with discrete pretence, he often seemed not even to glance at." (Du Jarric). He was a deeply religious man. He was always ready to learn the good points of all religions. It is wrong to say that he gave up Islam towards the end of his life. We have testimony of Jahangir that his father was a Muslim up to his death. However, he was not a bigoted Muslim. He often used to say that "there is no need to discuss the point that a vacuum in nature is impossible. God is omnipresent." Again, "Each man according to his condition gives the Supreme Being a name, but in reality to name the unknowable is vain." "There exists a bond between the Creator and the creature which is not expressible in language."

He was a man of deep affections. He was a dutiful son of his parents. He was kind towards his brother, Hakim, although the latter gave him a lot of trouble. He loved his son, Salim, very much and in spite of his rebellions, forgave him towards the end.

Akbar possessed a large measure of humanity in his character. He hated pride and arrogance. When he started the Din-i-Ilahi, many requested Akbar to guide them, but his reply was, "Why should I claim to guide men, before I myself am guided." Akbar was fond of music and no wonder he patronised a large number of musicians. He possessed a large amount of knowledge of many kinds. According to Dr. Smith, "Anybody who heard him arguing with acuteness and lucidity on his subject of debate would have credited him with wide literary knowledge and profound erudition and never would have suspected him of illiteracy."

Akbar had a very lofty ideal of kingship. According to him, "Tyranny is unlawful in every one, especially in a sovereign who is the guardian of the world." Falsehood is improper in all men and most unseemly in monarchs. This order is termed the shadow of God and a shadow should throw straight." Again, "A

monarch is a pre-eminent cause of God. Upon his conduct depends the efficiency of any course of action. His gratitude to his Lord, therefore, should be shown in just Government and due recognition of merit ; that of his people in obedience and praise."

Akbar believed in a policy of aggression and conquests. His view was that "a monarch should always be intent on conquests, otherwise his neighbours rise in arms against him. The army should always be exercised in warfare lest from want of training they become self-indulgent."

According to Abul Fazl, Akbar was a perfect man. Such a view is not acceptable because every person is bound to have certain shortcomings. Critics point out to the presence of beautiful women in the weekly Mina Bazars held in the palace, but these stories can be set aside as later inventions of fertile imagination. However, it cannot be denied that in his early days, Akbar was very fond of women and his harem contained as many as 5,000 women.

The view of Du Jarric is that Akbar "was one of the most fortunate monarchs of his time. Everything came to him that he wished for.....Scarcely ever did he engage in an enterprise which he did not bring to a successful conclusion, so that 'as fortunate as Echebar' became a common saying throughout the East." Again, "And indeed he was a great king ; for he knew that the good ruler is he who can command, simultaneously, the obedience, the respect, the love and the fear of his subjects. He was a prince beloved of all, firm with the great, kind to those of low estate, and just to all men, high and low, neighbour or stranger, Christian, Saracen or Gentile : so that every man believed that the King was on his side."

Principal Sri Ram Sharma says : "The greatest of monarchs in his time, Akbar is sure of a high place among the rulers of mankind for his brilliant success in the great adventure of governing men. Among the rulers of India, he occupies a very high place for—among other things—his having attempted to bring Hindus and Muslims together with some success. If he did not succeed in creating a nation, it was because he could not hurry the march of events. It is worth remembering that at a time when Europe was plunged into a strife of warring sects, when Roman Catholics were burning Protestants at the stake, when Protestants were executing Roman Catholics, Akbar guaranteed peace not only to warring sects, but to differing religions. In the modern age, he was the first and almost the greatest experimenter in the field of religious toleration if the scope of the toleration, the races to which it has applied, and the contemporary conditions, be taken into account."

According to Dr Smith, Akbar "was born a king of men, with rightful claim to rank as one of the greatest sovereigns known to history. That claim rests securely on the basis of his extraordinary national gifts, his original ideas and his magnificent achievements."

The view of Sir William Sleeman is that "Akbar has always appeared to me among sovereigns what Shakespeare was among poets."

According to Edwardes and Garrett, "Akbar has proved his worth in different fields of action. He was an intrepid soldier, a great general, a wise administrator, a benevolent ruler, and a sound judge of character.....He was a born leader of men and can rightly claim to be one of the mightiest sovereigns known to history.....During a reign of nearly fifty years, he built up a powerful Empire which could vie with the strongest, and established a dynasty whose hold over India was not contested by any rival for about a century. His reign witnessed the final transformation of the Mughals from mere military invaders into a permanent Indian dynasty."

The view of Binyon is: "His greater achievement as a ruler was to weld this collection of different states, different races, different religions, into a whole. It was accomplished by elaborate organization—Akbar had an extraordinary genius for detail—still more by the settled policy which persuaded his subjects of the justice of their ruler. Though a foreigner, he identified himself with the India he had conquered. And much of his system was to be permanent. The principles and practice worked out by Akbar and his ministers were largely adopted into the English system of government. There is something engaging in Akbar's faults and weakness, which were not petty, but rather belonged to the things which made him great. He was above all things human."

According to Stanley Lane-Poole, Akbar was "the noblest king that ever ruled in India." He was "the true founder and organiser of the Empire." He "represents the golden age of the Mughal Empire." Malleson says: "Akbar's great idea was the union of India under one head.....His code was the grandest of codes for a ruler, for the founder of an empire. They were the principles by accepting which his western successors maintain it at the present day. Certainly, though his European contemporaries were the most eminent of their respective countries (Elizabeth in England and Henry IV in France), he need not shrink from comparison even with these. His reputation is built upon deeds which lived after him.....The foundations dug by Akbar were so deep that his son, although so unlike him, was able to maintain the Empire which the principles of his father had welded together. When we reflect what he did, the age in which he did it, the method he introduced to accomplish it, we are bound to recognise in Akbar one of those illustrious men whom Providence sends, in the hour of a nation's trouble, to reconduct it into those paths of peace and toleration which alone can assure the happiness of millions."

K.T. Shah gives his estimation in these words: "Akbar was the greatest of the Mughals and perhaps the greatest of all Indian rulers for a thousand years, if not ever since the days of the mighty Mauryas. But, without detracting in the least from the genius of

the man or the inheritance of his birth, it may yet be said that Akbar was so great, because he was so thoroughly Indianised. His genius perceived the possibilities, and his courage undertook the task of welding the two communities into a common nation by the universal bond of common service and equal citizenship of a magnificent Empire. Akbar was a born master of men, and bred an autocrat, in an age of despotism. It would be unjust to criticise him by the canons of another age, or from the standpoint of other ideals. Within the legitimate limits of a most searching criticism, there is much—very much indeed,—in his life and outlook and achievements, which must demand our unstinted, unqualified admiration, and little that could merit just censure."

About Akbar, Dr. Spear says that he was a remarkable personality. It is true that he was illiterate but this defect was made up by his wonderful memory and keen intellect. He also dictated his orders and also took the help of others to read out books to him. His leadership was magnetic and he extorted admiration even from his enemies. Wherever he went, he was acknowledged to be the leader. He was more humane and more generous than most men of his time. He possessed creative imagination. He was like Asoka in many ways.

According to Havell, "Akbar has shared the fate of all great reformers in having his personal character unjustly assailed, his motives impugned, and his actions distorted, upon evidence which hardly bears judicial examination.....He was neither an ascetic nor a saint of the conventional type; but few of the great rulers of the earth can show a better record for deeds of righteousness, or more honourably consistently maintained their ideals of religious life devoted to the service of humanity. In the western sense his mission was political rather than religious; but in his endeavours to make the highest religious principles the motive power of State policy he won an imperishable name in Indian History and lifted the political ethics of Islam into a higher plane than they had even reached before. It does not detract from his greatness as a man and ruler that his achievements fell short of his ideals—that the Din-i-Ilahi did not accomplish the spiritual re-generation of the ruling classes or wipe off the State all the records of previous centuries of misgovernment, and that his schemes did not embrace a full recognition of the ancient Aryan system of self-government upon which the economic strength and political greatness of India stood firm, longer than has been the case with any other empire in the world. But Akbar's endeavours to realise the Aryan ideal are still worthy of imitation both by the British rulers of India and by all statesmen for whom politics is a religion rather than a game of craft and skill."

Sir Wolseley Haig says: "Akbar was unquestionably the greatest of all rulers of India of the Muslim period. His age, it has been remarked, was an age of great rulers. His nearest contemporary was Elizabeth of England, but Henry IV of France and Abbas the Great of Persia were ruling their kingdoms during a great part of his reign. He was the first, if not the only, Indian

monarch to aspire to ruling a united people rather than to leading a dominant race, and his domestic alliances with Rajput families were what is now called a friendly gesture to the subject race, but by degrees he learned that Hinduism and Islam were incompatible, and, though he knew that such alliances as his were regarded by many of the subject race as an indelible disgrace, he laid the blame for his incompatibility chiefly upon the faith of his forefathers. Very early in life he adopted and practised the principle of *sulh-i-kul*, or universal toleration, but later there was one creed which he excepted from its benefits, and that one was his own former faith. Many Muslims, eager to claim so great a ruler as one of themselves, contend that Akbar always remained a Muslim, and never went beyond an attempt to reform the faith in the direction of making it less harshly intolerant ; but these ignore the undoubted fact that he definitely abjured Islam, and required others to abjure it, and that in the later part of his life he persecuted its followers and destroyed its places of worship."<sup>1</sup>

The view of Dr. Tripathi is that Akbar was one of the greatest kings which historic India had ever had. He was at once the child and father of his age. The problems before him were more complicated than those before Chandragupta, Asoka or the Guptas. He had to deal with the Hindus, Turks, Mughals and Persians and although he was a foreigner, he tackled the problems successfully. Akbar wanted to unite the warring world under one authority. He did his best to bring the whole of India under one rule by a uniform system of administrative, judicial and currency measures and agrarian and commercial laws. If his plan had been appreciated by the rulers of the Deccan and they had co-operated with him, India would have become the strongest and most prosperous country in Eurasia and the history of India would have been different. After uniting India, Akbar wanted to unite the mid-east and western Asia with her as a very important step towards the establishment of a world Empire. "Taken altogether, it may safely be said that Akbar was one of the greatest kings of all times."<sup>2</sup>

In his Foreword to *Akbar* by Mr. Justice J. M. Shelat, Dr. K.M. Munshi says : "The son of a foreigner who had lost all but a fragment of his grandfather's conquests, Akbar succeeded to a precarious hold over a small territory in India and to the all but notional leadership of restive and turbulent Mongol Khans. But, even in his teens, the boy developed a mature grasp over situations and unerring sense of power. He got rid of his all-powerful guardian protector. He balanced his Mongol chieftains by Persian diplomats. He gave up Kabul which his followers loved and got them to settle in India as their native land.

"Akbar was great as a diplomat. He knew when to shift his favours to keep recalcitrant chieftains in control and when to crush

1. *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p. 294.

2. *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, p. 344.

revolt and when to forgive a rebel. Akbar was great as a conqueror and knew when to be ruthless and when magnanimous. He was a great judge of human nature and knew how to evoke loyalty. He was great as an administrator, for he it was who converted a military raiding camp which was the Sultanate of Delhi into a well-organised empire which survived over two hundred years in spite of the narrow-mindedness or feebleness of those who succeeded him.

"One of the marvellous gifts of Akbar—which we find in no other great monarch in history—was the ability to rise above the partisan intrigues of the court : to outgrow the ideas and traditions of his time ; and to keep his efforts bent on the goal of establishing a non-religious, non-communal centre of power based on a just balance of forces. As a result, with statesmanship impossible in the 16th century and rare at all times, this foreign conqueror began to lay the foundations of a national monarchy for India over a people alien in race, religion and culture. The author traces this process with meticulous care : how the Rajputs were won over ; how they came to counterweigh the powerful Muslims at his court ; how, outgrowing sectarianism, he brought proud Hindu princesses as members of his family and left them to follow their own religion ; how he lifted the terrible pressure of persecution which the Sultans had exercised over the Hindus ; how he developed a non-denominational out-look which made the religious leaders of the Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and Christians as honoured in his day as the religious leaders of Islam ; how he frankly adopted non-Islamic ways whenever he found them militating against his cherished dream of a united Hindustan.

"The author has thus brought out in strong relief the steps by which Akbar made the Hindus feel that he was of them as much as he was of the Mongol, the Afghan, the Persian and the Turk. The Hindus in the north India, for the first time in four hundred years, felt that they were no longer the hunted of a ruthless military power. Mathura, Vrindavan and Gokul, the targets of venomous fanaticism, began to breathe freely. Hindu religious leaders came into their own. In effect, Akbar created the conditions in which the Bhakti Renaissance, with which the names of Chaitanya, Vallabha, Surdas and Tulsidas are associated, swept the country, bringing a new awakening and vitality to the culture of the land." (pp. VII-VIII).

In the same book, Mr. Justice J.M. Shelat says : "There are various facets of Akbar's personality which at once engross the attention of a student of his life. As a reformer, a lover of literature and patron of fine arts, he has left his impress on history. There is hardly any aspect of human life which his restless mind leaves untouched. Just as his powerful person would not rest until he has dominated over all his neighbours, his equally powerful mind does not rest until it has subdued problems—be they political, religious, social or administrative." (p. ix).

Mr. Justice Shelat says : "What can be fairly claimed for Akbar is that he emancipated India from the thralldom of the religion of a minority and extricated her from the clamps of theocracy. Among the rulers of his time he ranks as the foremost

for having endeavoured, in the atmosphere of fanaticism and intolerance prevalent in the 16th century, to fuse together the different classes of his subjects by bonds of a common citizenship and to establish a secular State. If he did not succeed in that great adventure, it was not due to want of effort but because the concept was too novel yet and he could not accelerate the march of events."

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## CHAPTER VI

# Jahangir (1605-1627)

### His Early Life

It has rightly been observed that Jahangir was the child of many prayers. Akbar wanted an heir to succeed him and he not only prayed to God but also begged of the blessings of saints to have such a son. He waited on Chisti at Ajmer for the same purpose. Ultimately, a son was born in August, 1569, and he was named Muhammad Salim. Akbar used to call him Shaikhu Baba.

As the child was got after many efforts, Akbar left no stone unturned to make him as much accomplished as he could be. He started his studies at the age of 4 and many capable tutors were employed to teach him Persian, Arabic, Turki, Hindi, arithmetic, history, geography and other sciences. The most important tutor was Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana who was a versatile genius.

Prince Salim was betrothed to the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das of Amber at the age of 15 and he was married in February, 1586. Khasrau was the offspring of this union. In addition to this marriage, Jahangir married many other women. The total number of wives in his harem was more than 800.

In spite of all the care which his father took, Prince Salim acquired all the evils of his age. He was a young man of very loose morals and was too much addicted to wine. Akbar did all that he could to mend him but failed.

In 1600, when Akbar was away in the Deccan engaged in capturing the fort of Asirgarh, Prince Salim who was probably "weary of waiting for the long deferred and ardently desired succession," broke into open rebellion, and declared himself as Emperor. Akbar had to return to Agra and he sent many threats and remonstrances to Prince Salim but all that had no effect on him. In 1602, Prince Salim offended his father by bringing about the death of Abul Fazl. Akbar was so very angry that he ordered that Bir Singh Bundela, the murderer, be put to death. However, Bir Singh escaped and thus saved his life. By these occurrences, the end of Akbar was hastened. There was a time when Akbar thought of superseding Salim by putting Prince Khusrau on the throne. The prince was the son of the sister of Man Singh

of Amber and also the son-in-law of Mirza Aziz Koka. He was handsome in appearance and blameless in private life. However, Akbar gave up the idea. Prince Salim came back to Agra and surrendered himself before his father. After some trouble, he was received well by his father. Particularly after the death of Prince Daniyal in April 1604, Prince Salim was left the only surviving son and heir.

When Akbar fell ill in October, 1605 and there was no chance of his life being spared, two parties were formed at the court. The one party headed by Man Singh and Mirza Aziz Koka was in favour of the succession of Khusrau and the other party was in favour of the succession of Prince Salim. As the party of Man Singh and Mirza Aziz Koka was in a minority, Prince Salim was chosen the successor. Akbar himself, before his death, placed the Imperial turban on the head of Salim, thereby recognising him as the successor. Thus it was that Prince Salim came to the throne in November, 1605.

### Early Measures

Prince Salim assumed the title of Jahangir or "World Grasper". He released many prisoners and struck coins in his name. He proclaimed his policy in 12 famous regulations. He prohibited the levy of many cesses called Tamga, Mir Bahri, etc. He prohibited the opening of merchants' bales without their knowledge and permission. He forbade the manufacture and sale of wine and intoxicating drugs. Government officers were ordered not to take possession of the house of any one. No Government Collector or Jagirdar was to inter-marry with the people of his Pargana without the royal permission. Government hospitals were to be established for the poor. He abolished the punishment of cutting of nose and ears. He forbade the officials to take possession of the land of the cultivator by force. He prohibited the slaughter of animals on certain days in the year. He ordered the building of **Sarais**, mosques and wells on the roads. The property of the deceased person was to be given to his heirs. In case there were no heirs, the property was to be used for the erection and repair of public buildings. Jahangir also confirmed all officers and Jagirdars in the posts which were occupied by them in the time of Akbar.

Jahangir ordered the setting up of the **chain of justice** between the Shah Burji in the fort of Agra and a stone-pillar fixed on the banks of the Jumna, for enabling the aggrieved persons to place their complaints before the Emperor. To quote Jahangir himself, "I ordered that the chain should be of pure gold, and be thirty *gaz* long with 60 bells upon it. The weight of it was four Hindustani Mans, equal to thirty-two mans of Iraq." It must have cost the Emperor about three lakhs.

### Revolt of Prince Khusrau (1606)

Five months after the succession of Jahangir to the throne, Prince Khusrau, whose relations with his father were not cordial

at all, left Agra with 350 horsemen on the pretext of visiting the tomb of Akbar, the Great. He was joined at Mathura by Hussain Beg with about 3,000 horsemen. Further on, he was joined by Abdur Rahim, Dewan of Lahore, who was coming to Agra. When Prince Khusrau reached Taran Taran, he got the blessings of Guru Arjun and probably also some money. After that, he marched towards Lahore and besieged the same. Lahore was defended by Dilawar Khan and hence could not be taken. Jahangir himself reached Lahore with a big army. The rebels were defeated in the battle of Bhairawal. After defeat, Prince Khusrau and his followers proceeded towards Kabul. However, they were captured while crossing the Chenab river. Prince Khusrau and his friends and followers were brought before Jahangir. The prince was chained and handcuffed and was weeping very bitterly. Everybody was moved by the sight but not Jahangir who ordered the Prince to be thrown into prison. Cruel punishments were inflicted on the followers of Prince Khusrau. To quote Jahangir himself, "I gave Khusrau into custody and I ordered these two villains to be enclosed in the skins of a cow and an ass and had to be placed on asses, faced to the tail and so to be paraded round the city." Guru Arjun who had blessed the Prince was not excused. He was ordered to be put to death and his property was confiscated.

The Intikhab-i-Jahangir Shah gives the following account of Jahangir's treatment of the Jains of Gujarat : "The Emperor ordered them to be banished from the country and their temples to be demolished. Their idol was thrown down on the uppermost steps of the mosque that it might be trodden upon by those who came to say their daily prayers there. By this order of the Emperor, the infidels were exceedingly disgraced and Islam exalted."

In 1607, Jahangir came to know of a plot which aimed at murdering him and putting Prince Khusrau on the throne. The ring leaders were ordered to be executed. Prince Khusrau was ordered to be blinded, although his eyesight was not completely lost.

Up to 1616, Prince Khusrau was kept in the capital as a prisoner. Then he was made over to Asaf Khan. In 1620, he was handed over to Prince Khurram who was not well-disposed towards him. In March, 1622, the prince was murdered.<sup>1</sup> Long afterwards, Aurangzeb is said to have, accused Shah Jahan of the murder of Khusrau and Parvez.

Prince Khusrau was very popular with the people and the nobility. It is stated that long after his death, his last resting place

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1. Regarding the murder of Khusrau, the Imperial historian has written thus : "It is entirely lawful for the great sovereigns to rid this mortal world of the existence of their brothers and other relations whose very annihilation is conducive to common good. And as the leaders, spiritual and temporal, justify the total eradication of the rival claimants to the fortunate throne (therefore) on grounds of expediency and common weal, and upon the suggestion of such wise counsellors, Khusrau was translated from the ditch of prison to the plains of non-existence."

in Allahabad was visited by people in a spirit of veneration and he was considered to be a "martyred saint".

About Prince Khusrau, Dr. Tripathi observes thus : "What would have been the history of India had Khusrau succeeded Akbar instead of Jahangir is a question no historian can undertake to answer. There is, however, no doubt that though the son of Jahangir, he was in many respects superior to his father. Thoughtful, cultured and sober, he had none of the vices which disgraced the character of Jahangir. He had no founts, for wine nor any weakness for women. His pleasant features, personal charms, social grace, purity of character, liberal views, dignified manners and kind and affectionate heart had made him a pet of his grand-father Akbar and extremely popular with the masses, and a large section of the nobles. It was believed, for good reasons, that he had imbibed the spirit of his grand-father more than any one of his descendants and was expected to carry on his policy more faithfully and successfully than any one else."<sup>1</sup>

### Nur Jahan

The story of Nur Jahan must occupy a very important place in the history of Jahangir. She was the daughter of Mirza Ghiyas Beg who himself was the son of Khwaja Mohammad Sharif who was a native of Tehran and Wazir of the Tartar Sultan, Beglar Begi of Khorasan. On account of unfavourable circumstances, Mirza Ghiyas Beg decided to try his luck in India. He took his journey under the protection of a wealthy merchant named Malik Masud. While Mirza Ghiyas Beg was on his way to India, a daughter was born at Kandhar. Mirza Ghiyas Beg was introduced to Akbar by Malik Masud and on account of his hard work and honesty, he rose to the high position of Diwan of Kabul. When his daughter named Mahrnunissa reached the age of 17, she was married to Ali Quli Beg Istaglu who was a Persian adventurer. He was given a Jagir in Bengal and also the title of Sher Afghan. Jahangir learnt that Sher Afghan was insubordinate and disposed to be rebellious. Consequently, Qutb-ud-Din, the new Governor of Bengal, was directed to chastise him. When Qutb-ud-Din went to carry out the orders, he was killed by Sher Afghan who himself was put to death by the attendants of Qutb-ud-Din. Afghan's widow, Mahrnunissa, was brought to Agra and was placed under Sultana Salima Begum in 1607. In 1611, she married Jahangir who gave her the title of Nur Mahal or "Light of the Palace". The title was changed later on to Nur Jahan or "Light of the World".

There has been a lot of controversy regarding the circumstances of the death of Sher Afghan and the marriage of his widow with Jahangir. Dr. Beni Prasad, the author of his monumental work on Jahangir, was of the opinion that Prince Salim had never seen Mahrnunissa. Akbar had also not forbidden the marriage between Prince Salim and Mahrnunissa and Jahangir saw her for the first time

1 *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, p. 362.

in 1611. He maintained that no contemporary Persian source supported the view that Jahangir as a prince had desired to marry Mahrnunissa and Akbar had refused permission. No contemporary Persian writer has held Jahangir responsible for the murder of Sher Afghan. Likewise, the contemporary European travellers and missionaries are also silent on this point. If it is accepted that Akbar had opposed the marriage of Mahrnunissa with Salim, he would not have placed Sher Afghan on the staff of Prince Salim in 1599. Moreover, if Salim had considered Sher Afghan as his rival, he would not have given him promotions after his accession to the throne and even before. Qutb-ud-Din was appointed the Governor of Bengal not for the purpose of bringing about the murder of Sher Afghan but because Jahangir wanted to remove Man Singh from that important province. Moreover, a woman like Nur Jahan would never have agreed to marry the murderer of her husband.

According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, there is every possibility that Jahangir as a Prince loved Mahrnunissa and wanted to marry her. There is every possibility of his complicity in the murder of Sher Afghan. According to him, the arguments given by Dr. Beni Prasad in favour of the innocence of Jahangir are of a negative nature. There is nothing to contradict the positive assertions of the later Indian historians who were "in a better position to state the truth in a matter like this than their predecessors." Moreover, there were no definite charges against Sher Afghan and the Governor, Qutb-ud-Din, was instructed to punish him only if he "showed any futile seditious ideas." To quote Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "Our suspicions are confirmed by the suddenness with which the arrest was attempted." Jahangir himself was very fond of mentioning even the most trivial affairs of his life in his Memoirs. He has omitted altogether the circumstances of his marriage with Nur Jahan. That creates the suspicion. He mentioned the name of Nur Jahan for the first time in 1614. It is also pointed out that after the death of Sher Afghan, Mahrnunissa should have been sent to her father or brother who were both living. There was absolutely no justification for her being brought to the royal palace and kept under the control of the step-mother of Jahangir. It is worthy of note that such a thing was never done in the case of the widows of other nobles and officers. De Laet, a Dutch contemporary, says that Jahangir loved Mahrnunissa when he was a Prince. Jahangir intentionally did not marry Mahrnunissa for four long years with a view to removing the suspicion from the mind of the people regarding the death of Sher Afghan. Moreover, some time was required for reconciling Mahrnunissa, who must have been unhappy over the death of her husband. The conclusion of Dr. Ishwari Prasad is that "the circumstances of Sher Afghan's death are of a highly suspicious nature. Altogether there is no conclusive evidence to prove that the Emperor was guilty of the crime."

The character of Nur Jahan provides a fascinating study. There is much in her which deserves praise. She had "a piercing intelligence, a versatile temper, sound commonsense." She could

understand the most intricate problems of the state without any difficulty. No political or diplomatic problem was beyond her comprehension. The greatest statesmen and ministers bowed to her decisions. She was fond of poetry and wrote verses. She not only possessed superb beauty but was also a lover of beauty. She did a lot to add to the splendour and glory of the Mughal court. She set the fashions of the age. She designed new varieties of silk and cotton fabrics. She suggested models of jewellery.

Nur Jahan was possessed of great physical strength and courage. She went out on hunting tours with her husband. On more than one occasion, she shot ferocious tigers. Her presence of mind was remarkable. This is clear from the rebuke she gave to her brother, Asaf Khan, when Jahangir was imprisoned by Mahabat Khan on the river Jhelum. Nur Jahan was at her best at the time of difficulty. Even generals and soldiers were amazed at the manner in which she behaved at the time of an emergency. When her husband was imprisoned by Mahabat Khan, she seated herself on an elephant and tried to rescue him even by endangering her own life.

She worked very hard and no details of administration escaped her notice. She was generous and the refuge of the poor and the destitute. She provided money for the marriages of orphan Muslim girls. She was the "asylum of all sufferers." According to Jahangir himself, "Whosoever threw himself upon her protection was preserved from tyranny and oppression, and if ever she learnt that any orphan girl was destitute and friendless, she would bring about her marriage and give her a wedding portion. It is probable that during her reign no less than 500 orphans were married and portioned."

Nur Jahan raised her own kiths and kins to high positions. Asaf Khan, her brother, was made the first minister of the state. She also gave a high position to her father. Likewise, when she married her daughter to Shahriyar, many favours were showered on him.

Her devotion to Jahangir was unmatched. She loved him so much that he forgot all about the world. No wonder, he entrusted all the work of the Government to her. Jahangir used to remark: "I have sold my kingdom to my beloved queen for a cup of wine and a dish of soup."

Nur Jahan was the ruler herself. The highest dignitaries of the state came to her for favours. A word from her could make or mar the career of any one. Rebels against the state requested her to interfere on their behalf. It was because of her that Jagat Singh, the hill chief of the Punjab, was forgiven and "the pen of pardon was drawn through record of his faults."

If Nur Jahan had virtues, she had her faults also. She was extremely jealous and could not tolerate the rise of others. She was afraid lest their rise should weaken her position. This is clear from the treatment meted out by her to Mahabat Khan who

had been sent to pursue Prince Khurram in the Deccan. Mahabat Khan had done his job so nicely that he had succeeded in turning out the Prince from the Deccan and also from Bengal where he had retired. This made him the idol of his soldiers. It was his popularity which created jealousy in the mind of Nur Jahan. She recalled him from his mission and ordered him to send to the court the elephants he had obtained in Bihar and Bengal and also render an account of the money alleged to have been received by him from the dispossessed jagirdars. Mahabat Khan proceeded towards the Punjab where the Emperor was with a view to presenting his case personally. He had with him four to five thousand Rajput soldiers. Jahangir had come back from Kashmir and was going to Kabul and he was to cross the river Jhelum next morning. News of the approach of Mahabat Khan upset the Royal party. Jahangir ordered Mahabat Khan to remain where he was and Nur Jahan asked him to explain as to why he had married his daughter to a nobleman's son named Barkhurdar without the previous permission of the court. Barkhurdar was summoned to the court. He was publicly disgraced and sent to prison with his hands tied to the neck. The dowry given by Mahabat Khan was forfeited. All this was too much for Mahabat Khan. He got Jahangir arrested and Nur Jahan had also to submit for the time being. However, when the control of Mahabat Khan over the Emperor ended, he ran away to the Deccan and joined hands with Prince Khurram who was already in revolt. It cannot be denied that Nur Jahan was responsible for turning Mahabat Khan into an enemy. The man who could have been used against the enemies of the empire, was himself turned into an enemy.

Nur Jahan was responsible for the loss of Kandhar in 1622. The Persians besieged Kandhar and the Mughal garrison appealed for help to Jahangir. Nur Jahan who was at the helm of affairs ordered Prince Khurram to proceed to Kandhar but the latter refused to do so. There is no denying the fact that the refusal of Khurram was due to her behaviour towards him. She had done things which could not be tolerated by Khurram. She was favouring her son-in-law<sup>1</sup> at the cost of Khurram. The latter had requested again and again for the grant of the Jagir of Hissar Firoza, but that was given to Shahriyar, who had been rightly nicknamed "Nashudani," or "good-for-nothing" by his contemporaries. Khurram was right in suspecting that in his absence in Kandhar, Shahriyar might be given further promotion and he himself might be disposed of in the battlefield. Even Dr. Beni Prasad admits that in the absence of Prince Khurram, Nur Jahan was sure to push her creature Shahriyar to the front and undermine the position of Prince Khurram. It was this fear which forced Khurram to rebel against his father rather than fight against the Persians and thereby Kandhar was lost to the Mughals. It was Nur Jahan who was primarily responsible for

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1. Ladli Begum, daughter of Nur Jahan from her first marriage, was married to Shahriyar.

this. It cannot be denied that the system of Government degenerated under her control. Everything became rotten. There were plots, intrigues and conspiracies. Sir Thomas Roe tells us that the things had come to such a pass that even he himself had to offer a very costly present to Asaf Khan to get his own work done.

Dr. Ishwari Prasad says that it was under the influence of Nur Jahan that Jahangir became a thorough-bred pleasure-seeker and completely forgot the duties of his office. If Jahangir's reign forms an inglorious period in the annals of the Mughal dynasty, she must share the responsibility in no small measure. The new fashions and tastes which she fostered are a poor compensation for the lack of military achievement or administrative reform which must remain the supreme test of the greatness of rulers and statesmen. The dominating Begum made her husband travel fast on the path of ease till he ceased to take all interest in public business and began to look upon alcohol as a prudent friend.

Dr. Tripathi says: "The influence which she exercised over her husband was mostly moral, emotional, spiritual and possibly intellectual. It, however, led some people to believe that in political sphere also her influence was equally great and politics of the day, particularly after the death of her father, was entirely dominated by her. This suspicion was strengthened by her interested detractors who wanted to exploit it for their own ends. Opinions are easily formed and popular currency is given to them equally easily. If facts are stripped of opinion and scrutinized on their own merit, they hardly support the popular view. To argue that a lady of such energy, vitality and personality could hardly resist the temptation of meddling in politics is to beg the question and take to unscientific reasoning. Only once did she take an appreciable part in war and politics not for love of them or her inquisitiveness or ambition but to rescue her husband from the grip of Mahabat Khan. The driving motive was her love for her husband and brother and incidentally a desire to uphold respect and vindicate the dignity of the Crown of which she was also an ornamental part. Her responsibility for the rebellion of Khurram or Mahabat Khan or the so-called struggle for succession is a figment of imagination and popular myth and is as fanciful as the responsibility of Jahangir for the murder of Sher Afghan. The facts, however, indicate that far from being an evil genius hovering over Jahangir, she was his guardian angel."<sup>1</sup>

### War with Mewar

It is well-known that Maharana Pratap carried his struggle against Akbar for the whole of his life. When he died in 1597, he was succeeded by Amar Singh. He was not disturbed by Akbar for the rest of his reign. However, when Jahangir came

1. *Rise and Fall of Mughal Empire*, pp. 422-23.

to the throne, he re-started the war with Amar Singh and sent a force under Mahabat Khan. The Rajputs put up a stiff resistance and Mahabat Khan failed to achieve anything. Abdulla Khan was sent against Amar Singh, but he also did not achieve anything substantial. In 1614, Prince Khurram was sent against Amar Singh and he pushed on the campaign so vigorously that the Rajputs were made to come to terms. Amar Singh acknowledged Jahangir as his overlord. Jahangir also treated Amar Singh generously and tried to soften the humiliation of his defeats. All the country conquered by him since the invasion of Akbar was restored to him. He was also given the assurance that he would not be compelled to attend the court in person. Karan Singh, the son of Amar Singh, was raised to the Mansab of 5,000. After some time, Jahangir is said to have done special honour to Amar Singh and Karan Singh by directing the artists at Ajmer to fashion their full sized statues in marble. Those statues were removed to Agra and set up in the garden of the palace below the audience window.

About the end of the war with Mewar, Dr. Tripathi observes : "Thus came to a close the long protracted duel between the House of Timur and Chitor, which began in 1526, but became serious and continuous after 1567. The history of this war of resistance for half-a-century is full of the most thrilling events, prodigious valour, amazing loyalty, wonderful sacrifice, extra-ordinary endurance, nobility of character and high patriotism. Never before was the Rajput valour and idealism put to so severe a test and never did it shine forth with so much glory and splendour. It requires far nobler qualities to fight a losing battle against heavy odds for five decades, suffer untold miseries and sacrifice all comforts for a sentiment and a cause. If all the Rajput states had shown even half of that enthusiasm for independence, the history of the Mughal Empire would have been different for good or evil. But few outside the orbit of the Mewar group regarded this struggle as rational or were disposed to recognize it as a war between the Hindus and the Moslems, or a war of Hindu independence.

"Looking at the whole affair in cold historical perspective it is a matter of regret that the refusal of Maharana Pratap Singh to recognize the fact of the superior military power and unlimited resources of the Delhi Emperor, cost so much blood-shed and suffering and continued to inspire the conflict for twenty years more after his death. It is equally unfortunate that the diplomacy of the Mughal Emperors, even of Akbar, failed to inspire any confidence in the Ranas. If Rana Pratap had offered the terms which his successor offered to Jahangir, in all probability, Akbar would have gladly welcomed them. Whatever pride Jahangir might have taken in his achievements, he ought never to have forgotten that Mewar under Amar Singh was considerably weaker than what it was under Rana Pratap, and that it was not till the nobles and the Crown-prince had urged to make peace, that Amar Singh finally laid down his arms. It was after spilling the noblest blood of Mewar that its ruler and nobles realized that 'the peace of the people of Mewar

demand peace at the sacrifice of independence, as that sacrifice meant nothing more than bare recognition of Imperial suzerainty'. The rulers of Mewar strained every nerve and spared no pains humanly possible to keep the crimson banner of state independence flying. Therein lies their glory. But their inability to appreciate the force of facts produced nothing except a brilliant romance, which all lovers of chivalry will undoubtedly treasure. The struggle proved the vitality of the work done by Rana Kumbha, Rana Sanga and Maharana Pratap. Much credit is due to Jahangir, who treated the brave descendants of Mewar with chivalry and offered them a generous treatment which contrasts with the vulgarity of their co-religionists, the Marathas." (*Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, pp. 377-78).

According to Dr. G.N. Sharma, "The treaty of 1615 A.D. terminated almost a century old struggle between the ruling houses. It must be regarded as a political triumph for Jahangir and a personal triumph for Khurram. The treaty between Amar Singh and Jahangir stands on a different plain from that between a Mughal ruler and any other Rajput chief of Rajasthan. Whereas other Rajput rulers were required to attend the Imperial Darbar in person, the Rana was exempted and it was agreed to by the emperor that he would be represented by his crown prince. The humiliating practice of a matrimonial alliance which other Rajput chiefs had entered with the Mughal ruling family was not included in the terms of the treaty. These were the special concessions which were made to the Rana of Udaipur on account of his pre-eminent position among the Rajput rulers. An insistence on them too would have prolonged the century-old war between the Mughals and the Sisodias. The treaty not only accorded special treatment to the Rana but at the same time it reflected statesmanship and generosity on the part of Jahangir and his son Khurram.

"Some casual observers find fault with Amar Singh for giving up the struggle and entering into a treaty with the Mughals. According to them the restoration of Chittor was hedged with conditions and, therefore, was worse than useless. The sending of a Rajput contingent at the Mughal court from Mewar was a humiliation to the people of the state and betokened subservience.

"The above criticism is based on sentiment and ignores the suffering to which Mewar had been subjected by the prolonged warfare. The country had to pay price for peace, and that was the recognition by the ruler of the nominal suzerainty of the Mughals whose policy was not to interfere in the internal affairs of the vassal states of Rajasthan. The loss occasioned by the recognition of Mughal sovereignty was more than compensated by peace for two generations—a peace without humiliations, for the emperor did not insist on the presence of the Rana in the court and sending a 'Dola' to his harem. Those who condemn the treaty do not seem to realise the consequences of the prolonged struggle. It was an unequal war in which eventually Mewar was bound to perish sooner or later. If, as the critics say, war was bound to recur, two generations of peace

gave the Rana enough of strength to fight with a better chance of success. Hence barring sentimental satisfaction, the treaty proved to be beneficial for Mewar."<sup>1</sup>

### **Conquest of Kangra (1610)**

Jahangir also thought of capturing the fort of Kangra which Akbar had failed to do. Murtaza Khan, Governor of the Punjab, was directed to conquer Kangra, but he failed on account of the jealousy and opposition of the Rajput chiefs who were associated with him. Then Prince Khurram was put in charge of the command. The siege of Kangra was pushed on for weeks. Supplies were cut off. The garrison had to live on boiled dry grass. It was faced with death and starvation. After a siege of 14 months, the fort surrendered in November, 1620. In 1621, Jahangir visited it.

The royal visit is described in these words: "On the 24th of the month I went to pay a visit to the fortress and I gave order that the Kazi, the Chief Justice, and others learned in the law of Islam, should accompany me and perform the ceremonies required by our religion. After passing over about half a kos we mounted to the Fort, and by the grace of God, prayers were said, the Khutba was read, a cow was killed and other things were done such as never had been done before from the foundation of the Fort to the present time. All this was done in my presence and I bowed myself in thanks to the Almighty for his great conquest, which no previous monarch had been able to accomplish. I ordered a large mosque to be built in the fortress" (Wakiat-i-Jahangiri).

### **Conquest of Kistwar (1620)**

The district of Kistwar had been able to maintain its independence in spite of the conquest of Kashmir. Efforts had been made in the time of Akbar to conquer it, but those were not crowned with success. Dilawar Khan, the Governor of Kashmir, brought the Raja of Kistwar to Jahangir in 1620. On account of the oppression of the Governor, the people revolted and a strong army had to be sent to crush the revolt. It was in 1622 that law and order was restored in Kistwar and the people settled down to a life of peace.

### **War with Ahmednagar (1610-1620)**

Akbar had established his authority over Ahmednagar and thereby ousted the Nizam Shahi dynasty. In the time of Jahangir, Malik Ambar, an Abyssinian adventurer, was able to restore the dynasty. Malik Ambar has been regarded as one of the greatest generals and statesmen of Medieval India. He was admired even by his enemies for the qualities of head and heart. He organised the revenue system on the same lines as that of Todar Mal. He trained the Marathas in guerilla warfare. According to Motamad Khan, the Mughal historian, "In warfare, in command, in sound judgment and in administration, he had no rival or equal. He well understood the

1. *Mewar and The Mughal Emperors*, pp. 138-139.

predatory warfare which in the language of the Deccan is called *Bargi Giri*. He kept down the turbulent spirits of the country and maintained his exalted position to the end of his life, and closed his career in honour. History records no other instance of an Abyssinian slave reaching such eminence." Another writer pays the following tribute to Malik Ambar: "A born leader of men, he conciliated all parties, maintained order, and left a name for justice, vigour and benefit which have not been forgotten yet."

Malik Ambar took advantage of the rebellion of Prince Khusrau and attacked the imperial forces in the Deccan. With the help of his Maratha troops, Malik Ambar defeated Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana and recaptured Ahmednagar in 1610. Khan-i-Khana was recalled and Khan Jahan succeeded him. As the mind of the Emperor was otherwise busy with the affairs of Nur Jahan, no action could be taken against Malik Ambar for the present. However, in 1612, an army was sent from Gujrat to help Khan Jahan, but nothing substantial was achieved. The Maratha cavalry harassed the Mughal troops of Khan Jahan Lodi and Prince Parvez did not dare to attack Malik Ambar again. In 1616, Prince Khurram was entrusted with the command. He offered terms of peace to Malik Ambar and the latter accepted the same. Adil Shah gave presents worth 15 lakhs to Prince Khurram and also promised to restore all the territory which had been seized by Malik Ambar. The treaty was ratified by Jahangir who also conferred the title of Farzand upon Adil Shah. Prince Khurram was given the title of Shah Jahan and his Mansab was raised to 30,000 Zat and 20,000 Sawar. There was a lot of rejoicing but the fact remains that Ahmednagar was not conquered and the power of Malik Ambar was not crushed. This state of affairs continued till 1629 when Malik Ambar died.

### **Affairs of Kandhar**

Kandhar had been annexed by Akbar by a stroke of good luck and it continued to be a part of the Mughal Empire throughout the rest of his reign.

On account of its strategic position and commercial importance, Kandhar was the bone of contention between India and Persia. It was the gateway to India and a natural base of operations for an invader coming from Central Asia or Persia. The power controlling Kandhar could also easily capture Kabul and that is the reason why the Mughals attached great importance to the possession of Kandhar. Moreover, Kandhar was the place where merchants from India, Central Asia, Turkey and Persia met.

When Akbar died in 1605 and there was the revolt of Prince Khusrau, Shah Abbas, the Persian ruler, instigated the chiefs of Khorasan to attack Kandhar. The Indian Governor put up a stiff resistance. Jahangir also sent reinforcements. The result was that the attack on Kandhar failed. Shah Abbas expressed his complete ignorance of the whole affair. He not only rebuked

the Khorasan nobles but also apologised to Jahangir. The matter rested there for the time being.

In 1611, Shah Abbas sent an ambassador to Agra with rich presents and letters of flattery for Jahangir. Other missions were also sent for the primary purpose of flattering Jahangir and thereby putting him off his guard. Such missions were sent in 1615, 1616 and 1620. In 1621, Shah Abbas sent a large army for the capture of Kandhar. The siege actually started in 1622. When the news reached India, Jahangir ordered Shah Jahan to proceed to Kandhar. Shah Jahan had his grievances against the treatment meted out to him by Nur Jahan who was advocating the cause of her son-in-law. Shah Jahan also suspected that he may not be quickly disposed of on the Kandhar front under the instructions of Nur Jahan.<sup>1</sup> The result was that instead of proceeding to Kandhar he revolted against the Mughal Government. The fort of Kandhar fell after a siege of 45 days. Shah Abbas attempted to justify his capture of Kandhar but Jahangir accused him of treachery and deceit. He also ordered Prince Parvez to recapture Kandhar but the order was cancelled at the instigation of Asaf Khan. The result was that Kandhar could not be recaptured during the reign of Jahangir.

### Bubonic Plague

Bubonic plague broke out in the Punjab in 1616. It spread to Sirhind and the Doab as far as Delhi. Jahangir has described the disease in these words: "When it was about to break out, a mouse would run out of its hole as if mad, and striking itself against the door and walls of the house, would expire. If immediately after this signal, the occupants left the house and went to the jungle, their lives were saved; if otherwise, the inhabitants of the whole village would be swept by the hand of death.

"If any person touched the dead or even the clothes of a dead man, he also could not survive the fatal attack. The effect of the epidemic was comparatively more severe upon the Hindus. In Lahore, its ravages were so great that in one house 10 to 20 persons would die, and their surviving neighbours annoyed by the stench, would be compelled to desert their houses full of habitations. The dead were left locked, and no person dare to go near

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1. Dr. Tripathi does not accept this view. According to him, the command over a powerful and large army which Jahangir had decided to send, would have given Shah Jahan sufficient means to hold his own. If the worst came to the worst, he could enter into an alliance with the Shah of Persia. It is pointed out that Shah Jahan had not refused to go to Kandhar. He had merely stated that he would go there after the rains. Moreover, he wanted to have an absolute command of the army and full control of the Punjab in case he was to go to Kandhar. Shah Jahan knew that without that control, it will not be possible for him to do his work successfully. He realised the importance of the full co-operation of the province situated on the main road and contiguous field of operations. He also wanted to give some time to his men to prepare for the journey for Kandhar.

them through fear of his life. It was also very severe in Kashmir where its effect was so great that a Darvesh who had performed the last said offices of washing the corpse of a friend, the very next day was met with the same fate. A cow, which had fed upon the grass in which the body of the man was washed also died. The dogs also, which ate the flesh of the cow fell dead upon the spot. In Hindustan, no place was free from this visitation which continued to devastate the country for a space of eight years."

The plague broke out in Agra in 1618-19 and spread to all the surrounding areas. About 100 persons died every day. Both the rich and the poor were affected. In spite of heavy mortality, the State did not devise any methods to check the deaths.

### **Revolt of Shah Jahan (1623-25)**

It has already been pointed out that Shah Jahan revolted instead of going to Kandhar. Jahangir came out to oppose Shah Jahan personally. The opposing armies met at Balochpur and Shah Jahan suffered heavy losses. After that, the Prince retired to the Deccan. He could not get help from the Governor of Gujarat. He went to Burhanpur and from there proceeded towards Bengal which he reached in 1624. He was able to take possession of both Bengal and Bihar on account of the favourable attitude of the Mughal authorities there. Prince Parvez and Mahabat Khan pursued Shah Jahan and completely defeated him in the battle. Shah Jahan was again forced to go back to the Deccan. At this stage, he tried to make friends with Malik Ambar of Ahmednagar. In 1625, reconciliation was brought about between Shah Jahan and Jahangir. Shah Jahan agreed to surrender Rohtasgarh and Asirgarh and also sent Aurangzeb and Dara Shikoh as hostages.

### **Death of Jahangir (1627)**

The health of Jahangir was completely shattered on account of too much of drinking. He was trying to restore it by visiting Kashmir and Kabul. He went from Kabul to Kashmir but returned to Lahore on account of severe cold. He died on the way in October 1627. His body was brought to Lahore and was ultimately interred in the Jahangir tomb near Shahdara (Lahore).

### **Visits of Foreigners**

Captain W. Hawkins and Sir Thomas Roe visited India in the time of Jahangir. As regards Hawkins, he was an adventurous English seaman and he arrived in India in 1608 with a letter from James I to the Emperor of India, "The Great Mughal." There was a lot of opposition but in spite of that he managed to reach Agra to deliver the letter in person. He was well-received by Jahangir and he became his favourite. Hawkins lived at the Mughal court for about three years (1608-11) and enjoyed the hospitality of the Emperor. So far as the object of his mission was concerned, he failed to accomplish anything on account of

the intrigues of the Portuguese Jesuit missionaries. Hawkins married an Armenian Christian lady at the bidding of Jahangir.

Hawkins has written a lot about the habits of the Emperor, the court etiquette, the condition of the people and the administrative system of the country. He tells us that Jahangir was a heavy drunkard. There were many feasts at the Royal Court and the most important was that of Nauroz. There was also the law of escheat by which after the death of a nobleman, all his property was taken over by the king. Hawkins has referred to the causes of the wealth of the Mughal Emperor. Those were the treasure and jewels of the ancestors, property of the nobles which came by way of escheat, money brought into the country by foreign merchants and the possession of land.

Hawkins tells us that when the king got angry, terrible results followed. He might order a man to be flayed alive, or torn to pieces by elephants or tortured to death in many ways. The king was a mixture of opposites. On one occasion he might order the murder of a person and on another occasion he may forgive generously or intervene to save the life of some innocent person. Jahangir showed himself publicly three times a day to hear petitions of the people and give justice to them. Bribery was very common and the local authorities were oppressive. The Provincial Governors could do whatever they pleased and there was no effective check on them.

Sir Thomas Roe was sent by James I in 1615. He was both a scholar and a courtier and was well qualified for the job given to him. He reached Surat in September 1615 and proceeded to Ajmer where Jahangir was. He remained at the court of Jahangir from 1615 to 1618. He succeeded in obtaining a Firman from Jahangir allowing the English to trade at Surat. The Journal of Sir Thomas Roe and the Diary of the clergyman, Edward Perry, form a very valuable source for the reign of Jahangir. Sir Thomas Roe got the concession by bribing Asaf Khan.

The Journal of Roe gives a pen-picture of the Royal Court and the important personalities of the country. He tells us that the Mughal court observed a lot of pomp and show. He describes the festivities in which the nobles took part. He also refers to the squalor and misery of the peasantry. The public highways were insecure. Local administration was completely inefficient and corruption prevailed everywhere. Roe was struck by the fact that there were no written laws in India and the word of the king was law. The control of the Central Government over the provinces was not what it should have been. He also refers to law of escheat by which the property of a noble passed to the Emperor after his death. He tells us how the favourites of the king were given promotions whether they deserved it or not. According to Roe, Jahangir had neither pride nor conceit. There were scenes of drunkenness and revelry at night. Roe was a

clever diplomat. He possessed plenty of shrewdness and business capacity.

Roe tells us that the merchants were harassed at the ports. The Deccan was in a state of ruin. The art of painting was highly advanced.

### Estimate of Jahangir

According to Dr. V.A. Smith, Jahangir was a "a strong compound of tenderness, cruelty, justice and caprice, refinement and brutality, good sense and childishness." He wrote his Memoirs known as *Tuzk-i-Jahangiri*. The Emperor possessed plenty of intelligence and ability but his habit of excessive drinking completely ruined him. He was not cruel by nature, but he behaved cruelly on certain occasions. He loved justice and was always ready to give the same to the people. He possessed very liberal views on religious matters. He possessed a fine critical taste in matters of dress and pleasures of the table. He designed new fashions. He relished fine fruits.

Jahangir was not in the morning what he was in the evening. "By day he was the picture of temperance, at night he became exceedingly glorious in the company of his nobles." He possessed a violent temper and there was every possibility of his behaving in a very cruel manner. Excessive drinking was responsible for his fits of violent temper. When he was sober, he was magnanimous and forgiving. He gave gifts to the needy.

Jahangir was a typical autocrat, a warm-hearted friend and a generous patron. He was a lover of nature and he loved ease and indolence. He was "a lover of things Indian, and feels delight in Indian surroundings. There is much in his character that deserves to be condemned, but there is a great deal that entitles him to be placed among the most fascinating personalities of Indian history."

According to Jaffar, "Jahangir was a great ruler, capable of enormous energy. If he had not allowed himself to be dominated by the Nur Jahan clique, he would have proved himself an excellent administrator, worthy to be placed by the side of his father. It must, however, be pointed out that the real glory of his reign has been greatly eclipsed by the splendour of the two reigns that followed and preceded his, and he himself has suffered much on account of the coming between two illustrious sovereigns—Akbar, the Great and Shah Jahan, the magnificent."

According to Sir Richard Burn, "He stands in the roll of Indian monarchs as a man with generous instincts, fond of sport, art and good living, aiming to do well to all, and failing by the lack of the finer intellectual qualities to attain the ranks of great administrators."<sup>1</sup>

According to Beveridge, "Jahangir was indeed a strange mixture. The man who could stand by and see men flayed alive could yet be a lover of justice and could spend his Thursday evenings in holding high converse. He could procure the murder of Abul Fazl and avow the fact without remorse, and also pity the royal elephants because they shivered in winter when they sprinkled themselves with cold water. One good trait in Jahangir was his hearty enjoyment of nature and his love of flowers."

According to Dr. A. L. Srivastava, "Jahangir cannot be called a great king, nor can he be described as a statesman and administrator of outstanding calibre. He was by no means a first rate general or diplomat. But it must be admitted that he was a successful and benevolent ruler who cherished the well-being of his subjects and was deservedly popular with them. Like most rulers, he had his virtues and faults." Again, "Jahangir was fairly a successful ruler and administrator. He had the capacity of appreciating the needs and circumstances of the age and the good sense to continue the administrative system and policy devised by Akbar. But he was not a constructive statesman who could initiate great administrative reforms and legislate for the good of the generation yet to be born. He did not possess high idealism and genius of Akbar."

According to Dr. Beni Prasad, Jahangir was "a sensible kind-hearted man, with strong family affections and unstinted generosity to all with a burning hatred of oppression and a passion for justice. On a few occasions, in his career as prince and emperor, he was betrayed, not without provocation, by fits of wrath into individual acts of cruelty. But as a rule, he was remarkable for humanity, affability and an open mind." According to Francis Gladwin, "From the beginning to the end of his reign, Jahangir's disposition towards his subjects appears to have been invariably humane and considerate."

However, as Dr. Tripathi points out, the seed of religious persecution was sown in the reign of Jahangir. Guru Arjan and the Seora Jains suffered not on account of treasonable activities, but because Jahangir had developed hatred against their religions. It is also pointed out that Kaukab, son of Kamar Khan, Abdul Latif, son of Naqil Khan and Sharif were thrown into prison and flogged on account of their opinions. It was under the orders of Jahangir and also in his presence that a bullock was killed in the temple of Kangra. It was Jahangir who gave orders for the desecration and destruction of the temples near Pushkar in Ajmer.

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## CHAPTER VII

# Shah Jahan<sup>1</sup> (1627-1658)

### Early Life and Accession to Throne

Shah Jahan was one of the four sons of Jahangir. His original name was Khurram. He was born in January, 1592, at Lahore from a Hindu mother. While young, he was a favourite of Akbar. He was smart, intelligent and ambitious. No effort was spared to give him the best education.

Even while very young, he could be pointed out to be the successor to the Mughal throne after the death of Jahangir. Prince Khurram was liked by his father and Shahriyar had still not come into the picture. It was on account of his bravery and sense of responsibility that he was put in charge of many expeditions by his father. In 1607, he was given the Mansab of 8,000 Zat and 5,000 Sawar. In 1611, he got the Mansab of 10,000 Zat and 5,000 Sawar. In 1612, he married the daughter of Asaf Khan. He was also promoted to the rank of 30,000 Zat and 20,000 Sawar.

However, there was a sudden fall in the fortunes of Prince Khurram after the marriage of Prince Shahriyar with the daughter of Nur Jahan. On account of this matrimonial relation, Nur Jahan backed the claims of Shahriyar even at the cost of Shah Jahan. It was this fact that made Shah Jahan revolt in 1622. It is true that an amicable settlement was made between the father and the son in 1625, but Nur Jahan was bent upon supporting the cause of her son-in-law.

When Jahangir died in October 1627, Nur Jahan was with him. She summoned Shahriyar from Agra to Lahore with a view to putting him on the throne. Asaf Khan, the father-in-law of Shah Jahan, also backed the cause of Shah Jahan. Thus, both sister and brother supported their respective sons-in-law. Shah Jahan was not easily available as he was in the Deccan and it would have taken some time before he could reach Agra. The result was that Asaf Khan put Dawar Baksh, son of Khusrav, on the throne as a stop-gap arrangement. He was to continue on the throne till the arrival of Shah Jahan from the Deccan. Both Nur Jahan and Shahriyar were no match for Asaf Khan and the result was that both

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1. According to Sir Wolsely Haig, "Shah Jahan.....is not 'the virtuous sovereign with hardly a blemish on his character' depicted by contemporary Indian chroniclers, nor on the other hand, is he the monster of moral depravity described by some European travellers."

of them were defeated. Nur Jahan retired from public life and Shahriyar was imprisoned. When Shah Jahan arrived at Agra in February 1628, Dawar Baksh was removed from the throne and allowed to go to Persia where he spent the rest of his life. He was lucky to have saved his neck. Shah Jahan was responsible for the death of all his relatives. Nur Jahan died in 1645.

### **Rebellion of Bundela Rajputs**

Bir Singh Bundela was the murderer of Abul Fazl. His son, Jujhar Singh, made encroachments on the Mughal territory and showed signs of rebellion. The result was that Shah Jahan sent three armies from different directions to crush him. There was some desperate fighting and ultimately Jujhar Singh surrendered. He agreed to give Rs. 15 lakhs as war indemnity and 1,000 gold Mohurs as a present to Shah Jahan. He gave 40 elephants and also agreed to send an army of 2,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry to participate in the Deccan campaign. Shah Jahan allowed him to keep a Jagir for the maintenance of his rank of Chahar Hazari Zat and Chahar Hazari Sawar. In spite of this, Jujhar Singh revolted once again in 1635. He was pursued by the Mughal troops and killed by the Gonds in a chance skirmish.

### **Rebellion of Khan Jahan Lodi (1628)**

Khan Jahan Lodi was the Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy of the Deccan. He was originally an Afghan adventurer and he rose in life to the highest rank due to his own efforts. He entered into an alliance with the ruler of Ahmednagar and revolted. Shah Jahan realised the gravity of the situation. If Khan Jahan could win over all the rulers of the Deccan to his own side and lead their combined troops, it might become difficult to retain the Southern Provinces of the Mughal Empire. No wonder, Shah Jahan went to the Deccan in person in 1629 to conduct the campaign. Azim Khan, the Mughal General, was more than a match for Khan Jahan Lodi and the latter was driven from place to place. Ultimately, Khan Jahan retreated to the South with a view to taking shelter with the ruler of Bijapur. The allies of Khan Jahan, such as Shahji Bhonsla and Kaluji Bhonsla, voluntarily surrendered before the Mughal armies and were confirmed in their Jagirs. Khan Jahan failed to get any help from Bijapur. He proceeded towards Bundelkhand with a view to persuading its chiefs to revolt. Here also, luck did not favour him and instead of helping him, the chiefs opposed him. The result was that Khan Jahan was killed while fighting near the fort of Kalanjar in 1630.

### **The Nauroz of 1628**

Shah Jahan celebrated the feast of Nauroz of 1628 with great pomp and show. Every effort was made to make the occasion as sacred as possible. All the four princes stood on the four corners of his throne. Shah Jahan gave liberal gifts to the members of his family. The gifts were of the value of lakhs of rupees. The Mansab of Asaf Khan was raised to 9,000 Zat and 9,000 Sawar.

## Famine of 1630

In 1630, a famine broke out in the Deccan, Gujarat and Khandesh. So severe was the famine that thousands of people died of starvation. Parents did not hesitate to eat their children. According to Mirza Amin Quazwini, the people suffered terribly. The grocers and traders mixed powdered bones with flour and sold flesh of the dogs, which was mistaken for meat. After famine came pestilence. So great was the destruction that many villages were completely destroyed. Streets and lanes were glutted with human corpses. According to Abdul Hamid Lahori, "Destitution at length reached such a pitch that men began to devour each other, and the flesh of a son was preferred to his love. The number of the dying caused obstructions on the roads, and every man whose dire sufferings did not terminate in death and retained the power to move, wandered off the towns and villages of other countries. Those lands which had been famous for fertility and plenty now retained no productiveness." According to Peter Mundy, "The highways were strewn with corpses which emitted terrible stench. In the towns especially, they dragged them out by the heel, stark-naked, of all ages and sexes, till they are out of the gates and then they are left, so that the way is half barred up."

Dr. V.A. Smith contends that the Government did not perform its responsibility to relieve the sufferings of the people. The remission of one-eleventh of the assessment implies that the balance was collected from the people. However, such a view is not correct. According to Abdul Hamid, about Rs. 70 lakhs were remitted by the Government. To quote the same writer, "The Emperor in his gracious kindness and bounty directed the officials of Burhanpur, Ahmedabad and the country of Surat to establish soup-kitchens or alms-houses, such as are called *Langar* in the language of Hindustan, for the benefit of the poor and destitute. Every day sufficient soup and bread was prepared to satisfy the wants of the hungry. It was further ordered that so long as His Majesty remained in Burhanpur, 5,000 rupees should be distributed among the deserving poor every Monday. Thus on 20 Mondays one lakhs of rupees was given away in charity. Ahmedabad had suffered more than any other place, and so His Majesty ordered the officials to distribute 50,000 rupees among the famine-stricken people. Want of rain and dearth of grain had caused distress in many other districts. So, under direction of the wise and generous Emperor, taxes amounting to nearly 70 lakhs of rupees were remitted by the revenue officers—a sum amounting to nearly 8 crores of *dams*, amounting to one-eleventh part of the whole revenue. When such remissions were made from the exchequer, it may be conceived how great were the reductions made by the nobles who held Jagirs and Mansabs."

## Death of Mumtaz Mahal

Mumtaz Mahal was the daughter of Asaf Khan. She is rightly called the Lady of Taj. She was too much loved by her

husband who had many other wives also. She was not only extremely beautiful but also thoroughly devoted to her husband. She was her husband's companion during those days when his fortune got a setback.

When Shah Jahan became Emperor in 1628, she got an opportunity to show her real worth. She tried to do all that she could to help widows and orphans. She was the refuge of many miserable and oppressed men or women. She gave a lot of money in charity. She was kind to all those who came into contact with her. She died in 1631 and Shah Jahan built the Taj in her memory. The Taj is one of the wonders of the world and is a noble monument of conjugal love and fidelity.

### **War with the Portuguese (1631-32)**

The town of Hugli had risen into prominence on account of the establishment of Portuguese factories there. The Portuguese settlers very often captured the orphan children of the Hindus and Mohammedans and forcibly converted them to Christianity. These actions of the Portuguese were highly objectionable and the Mughal authorities resented them. Some of the Portuguese captured two slave girls which were claimed by Mumtaz Mahal. In spite of her requests, the slave girls were not released. Naturally Mumtaz Mahal was highly offended and she made up her mind to teach them a lesson. At that time, Shah Jahan was in revolt against his father and consequently nothing could be done against the Portuguese. However, even before his accession to the throne, Shah Jahan was well aware of the misdeeds of the Portuguese and was determined to crush their power.

In 1631, Kasim Khan was appointed the governor of Bengal and was ordered to take steps to exterminate the Portuguese. Large forces were sent for that purpose. The Portuguese were attacked from all sides and "sent to hell". The siege of Hugli lasted for more than three months. After a stiff resistance, the Portuguese surrendered. Their losses were very heavy. More than 10,000 of them were killed and more than 4,000 were made prisoners. Shah Jahan hated the fanaticism of the Portuguese. He offered the captives the choice of becoming Muslims or suffer life-long imprisonment or slavery. They were paid back in their own coin. Some of them became Muslims and others died suffering. It is to be noted that Shah Jahan was very vindictive against the Portuguese.

### **Shah Jahan's Deccan Policy**

Akbar had been able to conquer Khandesh and a portion of Ahmednagar. All his successors aimed at carrying to the logical conclusion the policy initiated by him in the Deccan. As the whole of Northern India had already been conquered, Shah Jahan could conveniently spare time, money and military resources for the conquest of the Deccan. Jahangir had already carried on a war with Malik Ambar of Ahmednagar. Shah Jahan had himself won spurs in the Deccan campaign. After his accession to

the throne, he made up his mind to complete the conquest of the Deccan.

Ahmednagar had helped Khan Jahan Lodi when the latter revolted against the Mughal authority. That was a sufficient excuse for the Mughals to attack Ahmednagar. Moreover, the chaotic state of affairs in the country helped Shah Jahan. After the death of Malik Ambar in 1629, there arose differences between Fateh Khan, the son of Malik Ambar, and Sultan Murtaza Nizam. The things became so bad that Fateh Khan was thrown into prison. However, he was released later on and restored to power on account of the Sultan's difficulties with regard to the Mughals. Although Fateh Khan was restored to power, he refused to forget and forgive the treatment meted out to him by his master. The result was that he started negotiations with Shah Jahan and under the instructions of the Mughal Emperor, captured Sultan Murtaza Nizam, put him in prison and ultimately got him murdered. Hussain Shah, a minor member of the royal family, was put on the throne of Ahmednagar and Fateh Khan himself became the power behind the throne. Fateh Khan did not remain faithful even towards Shah Jahan. He was in possession of the fort of Daulatabad. Shahji Bhonsla persuaded the Sultan of Bijapur to attack Daulatabad and punish Fateh Khan, and he himself joined the army of Bijapur. On behalf of Shah Jahan, Mahabat Khan went to the relief of the fort. Fateh Khan refused to give up the fort. The siege continued for two months and ultimately Fateh Khan and the garrison were bought off. The fort surrendered. Sultan Hussain Shah was captured and sent as a state prisoner to Gwalior. Thus, in 1632, the Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmednagar was ended. Fateh Khan was rewarded for his treacherous conduct. He was taken into the imperial service and granted a liberal salary.

Shahji Bhonsla revived the Nizam Shahi dynasty by placing another boy of the royal family on the throne. However, even he had to surrender to Shah Jahan. In 1636, the kingdom of Ahmednagar was completely destroyed and its territory was shared by Shah Jahan and the Sultan of Bijapur.

### **War with Bijapur**

In 1631, Muhammad Adil Shah of Bijapur had joined hands with Murtaza Nizam. This was tantamount to the defiance of Mughal authority. No wonder, he had to pay heavily for it. The Shah of Bijapur was besieged by Asaf Khan in his Capital. The people of Bijapur put up a stiff fight. The Maratha soldiers in the employment of Bijapur state rendered great service in harassing and plundering the Mughal army. The result was that the siege had to be raised and the kingdom of Bijapur was saved.

Nothing happened between 1631 and 1635. In the latter year, Shah Jahan had to take action against Shahji Bhonsla who tried to revive the state of Ahmednagar. Shah Jahan sent written commands to the rulers of Bijapur and Golconda requiring them

to recognise his sovereignty and also abstain from helping Shahji Bhonsla. They were informed that if they refused to accept the command, their territories would be attacked. The ruler of Golconda accepted the command of Shah Jahan and agreed to pay tribute. He also agreed to read the Khutba in the name of Shah Jahan and strike coins in his name. The ruler of Bijapur refused to accept the command of Shah Jahan and the result was that his territory was invaded. Khan Dowran was put in charge of the army. The capital of Bijapur was besieged. The Marathas repeated their old tactics. The districts surrounding the capital were deserted. The lands immediately surrounding the city were flooded with water. The besieging army was harassed in many other ways. It is true that the capital of Bijapur was saved but the Mughal troops plundered the rest of the territory with a vengeance. On account of the helpless condition of his people, the ruler of Bijapur was forced to come to terms with the Mughals. According to the treaty, the ruler of Bijapur agreed to pay Rs. 20 lakhs as "a peace offering." He also agreed to respect the integrity of Golconda which was claimed as a tributary state by the Mughals.

Having thus settled the state of affairs in the Deccan in 1636, Shah Jahan retired to Agra. Aurangzeb was appointed the Governor of the Deccan and he occupied that post for eight years (1636-44). During this period, Aurangzeb annexed Bagalna near Nasik and reduced the power of Shahji. Khan Zaman acted as the chief adviser of Aurangzeb. In 1653, Aurangzeb was appointed the Governor of the Deccan for the second time. He remained in that post till 1657 when he got the news of the illness of his father.

During the period of the second governorship, Aurangzeb introduced the same revenue system in the Deccan as was done by Todar Mal in the North. In this task, he was assisted by Murshid Kuli Khan. Advances were given to agriculturists to buy implements and seeds. Efficient and honest persons were appointed as administrators and consequently the tone of administration improved.

It has been pointed out that in 1636, the ruler of Golconda promised to pay annual tribute. However, he did not fulfil his promise. Moreover, he extended his territory with the help of Mir Jumla<sup>1</sup> who had been granted a Jagir in Carnatic in lieu of his services to the state. The Jagir was developed to such an extent that the ruler of Golconda became jealous of Mir Jumla and tried unsuccessfully to blind him. Mir Jumla ran away and sought refuge with the Mughals. Aurangzeb decided to take full advantage of the situation in Golconda. He marched upon Golconda and besieged the same. When victory was in sight, Shah

1. The real name of Mir Jumla was Muhammad Said. He was a Persian merchant-adventurer. He made a big fortune by trading in diamonds and precious stones. He entered the service of the Sultan of Golconda who was struck by his exceptional talents, military genius and administrative capacity. He was appointed the Chief Minister of the State and in course of time, he made himself the virtual dictator of the State. Though he had the rank of a noble, "he possessed the power, wealth and grandeur of a ruling prince."

Jahan ordered Aurangzeb to end the siege. A treaty was made in 1656 with the ruler. According to it, the ruler of Golconda was to pay a large indemnity and also give up some parts of his territory to the Mughals. He also promised to marry his daughter to one of the sons of Aurangzeb and also nominate his son-in-law as his heir. The property of Mir Jumla was to be restored to him and his son was to be released.

As regards Bijapur, its relations with Aurangzeb were not cordial on account of the fact that Mohammad Adil Shah sided with Dara Shikoh. In 1656, Adil Shah died and he was succeeded by his son Ali II who was hardly 19 years of age. Finding the time opportune, Aurangzeb marched on Bijapur which was absolutely unprepared. Very soon, Bidar and Kalyani were captured. The ruler of Bijapur sued for peace. According to the treaty, he was to give Bidar, Kalyani and Parinda to the Mughals. He was also to pay Rs. one crore by way of indemnity. Aurangzeb was in favour of carrying on operations still further but the news of the illness of Shah Jahan forced him to suspend the hostilities and proceed towards the North.

### **Loss of Kandhar**

Kandhar had been lost in 1623 in the time of Jahangir and no efforts were made to recover it till 1638. It was in that year that Shah Jahan turned his attention towards Kandhar. Ali Mardan Khan was the Governor of Kandhar on behalf of the Persian Government. When Ali Mardan came to know of the intention of the Mughal Emperor, he started his preparations for defence and requested the Shah of Persia to send him help. Unfortunately, the Shah of Persia misunderstood and suspected the designs of Ali Mardan. An attempt was made by the Shah of Persia to get Ali Mardan arrested. This was too much for Ali Mardan and he corresponded with the Mughal authorities. He surrendered Kandhar into the hands of the Mughals and took refuge at Delhi. He was honoured at the Mughal court and was made the Governor of Kashmir and Kabul. He was also employed on various military and other duties. He was responsible for carrying out many works of public utility.

Although Kandhar was lost, the Persians never gave up the hope of re-conquering it. Shah Abbas II made preparations for the recapture of Kandhar. The fort of Kandhar was besieged. The Mughal garrison fought desperately against the invaders for 57 days. When they felt that no relief was coming from India, they surrendered on 11th February, 1649. According to Inayat Khan, the following circumstances led to the surrender of Kandhar: "At length a number of the garrison from want of spirit, lost the little courage they possessed and Shadi Uzbeg having entered into a conspiracy with the Kazalbashis, seduced Kipchak Khan from his duty. Though the latter was naturally inclined at heart to this course of behaviour, yet as his companions had their families with them, through dread of losing their wealth, their lives and their good repute they would not let him follow the

bent of his own disposition so he was necessarily compelled to ally himself with those unfortunates. Some of the Mughal Mansabdars, Ahadis and Matchlockmen too, having sprinkled the dust of treason on the heads of loyalty, entered into league with them, and having come in front of the fort, declared that in consequence of all the roads having closed, from the vast quantity of snow on the ground, there was no hope of the early arrival of succour and that it was evident from the untiring efforts of the Kazalbashis they would very shortly capture the fort; and after its reduction by forces of violence, neither would there be any chance of their lives being spared, nor of their offspring being saved from captivity. The wretched Daulat Khan, who ought instantly to have extinguished the flames of this sedition with the water of the sword, showed an utter want of spirit by contenting himself with offering advice in reply. This, however, made no impression on the individuals in question who got up and departed to their respective homes so that nought but a scanty force having left in the entrenchments, the Kazalbashis entered the Sher Haji in several places."

### **First Siege of Kandhar (1649)**

Shah Jahan was determined to recapture Kandhar and consequently sent Aurangzeb with 60,000 cavalry and 10,00 infantry for that purpose. The siege of Kandhar was continued for three months and 20 days, but without any result. After that, Aurangzeb was ordered by Shah Jahan to withdraw from Kandhar.

### **Second Siege of Kandhar (1652)**

Aurangzeb was appointed the commander of the Mughal forces for the conquest of Kandhar for the second time. The second siege lasted for more than two months and 8 days and no success was achieved against the Persians in spite of the best efforts. The Persian artillery was more than a match for the Mughal artillery. In spite of the protests of Aurangzeb, Shah Jahan ordered the siege to be abandoned. When Aurangzeb asked for more time to complete the work, Shah Jahan gave the following reply: "If I had believed you capable of taking Kandhar, I should not have recalled your army. Every man can perform some work. It is a wise saying that men of experience need no instruction."

### **Third Siege of Kandhar (1653)**

Dara, the eldest son of Shah Jahan, was put in command of the third expedition to reconquer Kandhar. Dara boasted that he would finish the work within a week. This time thorough preparations were made for the siege of Kandhar. Millions were spent for the undertaking. The siege was continued for months and after that the attempt had to be given up. After 1653, no other attempt was made to recapture Kandhar.

The failure of the Mughal armies to recapture Kandhar in spite of three efforts gave a mortal blow to their prestige. The

Mughal Government wasted more than Rs. 12 crores. The failure of the last attempt proclaimed to the world the inefficiency and weakness of the Mughal forces. No wonder, throughout the rest of the 17th century, the danger of a Persian invasion gave headache to the rulers of India.

According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "The cause of the three failures of the imperial troops to recover Kandhar was their inferiority to their opponents, who from constant warfare with the Ottoman Turks and from their instruction and reorganisation by the Sherley brothers in the reign of 'Abbas the Great', had learned much of European methods of warfare, and particularly of the casting of guns and the use of artillery. The Indian troops had hardly advanced beyond the use of irregular cavalry, and their cavalry was not fit to face even the cavalry, much less the infantry, of the Persians. They had guns, huge hollow cylinders, with balls of irregular shapes, but they could seldom be fired, their fire was most inaccurate owing to windage, and the Indian troops relied rather on their moral than on their material effect. Moreover, in each of the successive attempts to recover Kandhar, it became more evident that the Indian troops were no match in discipline, physique, or courage for the Persians and that their artillery, as an engine of war, was contemptible."<sup>1</sup>

### **Balkh and Badakshan**

Shah Jahan was actuated by a desire to conquer Balkh and Badakshan although the latter had given him no cause for offence. There was a dispute in the royal family of Balkh and Shah Jahan thought of fishing in trouble waters. Abdul Aziz, the son of Nazar Muhammad Khan, the ruler of Bokhara, revolted against his father. Shah Jahan thought this to be the most opportune time for interference into the affairs of Bokhara. According to Sir J. N. Sarkar, the prosperity of his reign and the flattery of his courtiers turned the head of Shah Jahan and he started dreaming the vainest of the vain dreams. It was a foolhardy enterprise and there was absolutely no chance of success.

In 1646, Prince Murad and Ali Mardan Khan were sent with 50,000 cavalry and 10,000 infantry for the conquest of Balkh. Without much opposition, the Mughal armies entered the city of Balkh in July 1646. Its ruler ran away to Persia. After some time, Murad got sick of his stay in Balkh and without the permission of his father, left Balkh and came back to India. Shah Jahan sent Aurangzeb and Shah Shuja in place of Murad. One great difficulty of the Mughals was that they were outnumbered by the enemy. The Uzbek way of fighting also added to the difficulties of the Mughals. They did not offer a pitched battle and the Mughals found themselves helpless before the Cossack tactics of the Uzbeks. Aurangzeb entered Balkh and put the same under Madhu Singh Hada.

After Balkh, Aurangzeb thought of dealing a blow to the

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1. *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, pp. 319-20.

Uzbeks. Fighting continued for a very long time and the Mughals got fed up with the whole affair. They fought against the forces of Bokhara and defeated them.

There were prolonged negotiations and after that the Mughals retreated towards Kabul. They were furiously attacked by the Hazaras and had to suffer heavy losses.

It cannot be denied that the Central Asian policy of Shah Jahan failed miserably. In two years the Government had to waste aimlessly about Rs. 4 crores. The campaign added neither to the prestige of the Mughals nor to their territory. Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar has put the results of the Central Asian campaigns of the Mughal army in these words: "Thus ended Shah Jahan's fatuous war in Balkh—a war in which the Indian treasury spent 4 crores of rupees in two years and realised from the conquered country a revenue of Rs. 22½ lakhs only. Not an inch of territory was annexed, nor dynasty changed, and no enemy replaced by an ally on the throne of Balkh. The grain store in Balkh fort worth Rs. 5 lakhs, and the provisions in other forts as well, were all abandoned to the Bukharians, besides Rs. 50,000 in cash presented to Nazar Muhammad's grandson and Rs. 22,500 to envoys. Five hundreded soldiers fell in battle and ten times that number (including camp followers) were slain by cold and snow on the mountains."

### War of Succession (1657-58)

In September 1657, Shah Jahan fell ill. The physicians were not hopeful about his recovery. He even made his last will and testament. Different kinds of rumours regarding his death were circulated.

A disputed succession had become a sort of a family tradition with the Mughals. Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan had to fight their rivals to the throne. Although all the four sons of Shah Jahan were born of the same mother, they were not prepared to give up their inherent right to fight for the throne. All these four sons were of mature age. In 1657, Dara was 43, Shah Shuja 41, Aurangzeb 39, and Murad 33. All the four brothers had experience both in civil and military affairs. All of them were Governors of the provinces. Dara was the Governor of the Punjab, Murad of Gujarat, Aurangzeb of the Deccan and Shuja of Bengal.

As regards Dara, he possessed a lot of natural ability but at the same time suffered from a violent temper and haughty conduct. He freely associated with Muslim Sufis and Hindu Vedantists. He was responsible for the translation of the *Upnishads* into Persian. He did not find any fundamental difference between Islam and Hinduism as such. He possessed an eclectic spirit in religious matters. However, it is wrong to suggest that he was an apostate from Islam. He was considered a heretic by the Muslims. Dara was a favourite of his father and that was the reason why in spite of his being posted in the Punjab, he lived

with his father at Agra. He did not possess the qualities of a true statesman. He was vain and was not prepared to accept the advice of others. He was not a good soldier and his record in the battlefield was a very poor one. He was surrounded by flatterers. According to Lane-Poole, "Dara was a nervous, sensitive, impulsive creature, full of fine feelings and vivid emotions, never master of himself or of others and liable to lose his self-control just when cool judgment was most necessary. He might have been a poet or transcendental philosopher; he could never become a ruler of India." According to Manucci, "The first-born son of King Shah Jahan was the Prince Dara, a man of dignified manners, of a comely countenance, joyous and polite in conversation, ready and gracious of speech, of most extraordinary liberty, kindly and compassionate, but over-confident in his opinion of himself, considering himself competent in all things and having no need of advisers. He despised those who gave him counsel. This was why even his dearest friends never ventured to inform him of the most essential things. Still it was very easy to discover his intentions. He assumed that fortune would invariably favour him and imagined that everybody loved him."

Dara was never a heretic. He never "discarded the essential dogmas of Islam; he only displayed the eclecticism of the Sufis, a recognised school of Islamic believers. If he showed contempt for the external rites of religion, he only shared the standpoint of many noble thinkers of all churches, such as John Milton." According to another writer, "It is hardly an exaggeration to say that any one who intends to take up the solution of the problem of religious place in India must begin the work where Dara had left it, and proceed on the path chalked out by that prince."

As regards Shah Shuja, he was the Governor of Bengal. He was a victim to pleasures and luxury. Consequently, both his intellect and mental faculties were seriously affected. The result was that he could not make up his mind at the crucial moment. Moreover, Shah Shuja professed the Shia faith and consequently was hated by the Sunni Muslims who formed an over-whelming majority of the Muslims of India. According to Bernier, "He (Shah Shuja) resembled in characteristic traits his brother, Dara, but he was more discrete, firmer of purpose and excelled him in conduct and address." According to Manucci, "He knew how to acquire friends likely to help him in his important and reasonable affairs. His agents at the court succeeded in seducing many men from the service of Dara. He was a Shia by religion and it is believed that this religion was adopted with the object of winning support of the Persian officials of the Emperor who were also Shias." According to Lane-Poole, "Shuja's Zenana was the prison of his career."

Undoubtedly, Aurangzeb was the ablest of all the sons of Shah Jahan. He was a great soldier and general. He had given ample proof of his war-like qualities during the reign of his father and was more than a match for any brother in the battle-field.

He was very clever and consequently even the most intimate friends of his could not find out as to what was passing in his mind. He was a true statesman who could keep his head cool even in the event of a great calamity. He was a pious man and was loved by the orthodox Muslims for his religious zeal and fanaticism. He possessed a lot of administrative experience as the Governor of the Deccan and Gujarat. According to Bernier, "He was a consummate statesman and a great king, but endowed with a versatile and rare genius." According to Lane-Poole, "It has been usual to call the character of Aurangzeb a puzzling compound of contradictions. He possessed many great qualities, he practised all the virtues; but he was lacking in one thing needful in a leader of men, he could not win love. Such a one may administer an Empire, but he cannot rule hearts of men." According to Irvine, "His life was austere and laborious; he seems never to have indulged in a holiday. He belonged to that uncommon class of men who believe that their worst and most self-interested connections are directly inspired by God." According to Hunter, "His life would have been a blameless one, if he had no father to dispose, no brothers to murder and no Hindu subjects to oppress."

Murad was the youngest son of Shah Jahan. He was a brave and plucky soldier but otherwise dissolute, drunken and brainless. He was such a simpleton that he could be deceived very easily. According to Lane-Poole, "The youngest son of Shah Jahan was a gallant swash-buckler, brave as a lion, frank, and open as the day, a fool in politics, a despair in statecraft and a firm believer in ruddy steel. He was the terror of the battle-field and the best of good fellows over a bottle. No one could be better trusted in a melee, none was more fatuous in council or more reckless in a debauch. The hereditary passion for wine which had descended from Akbar to his posterity, found a willing victim in this valiant lion. He was, in short, brainless." According to Bernier, "His constant thought was how he might enjoy himself and the pleasures of the table and the field engaged his undivided attention."

### **Fight for the Throne**

As at a signal, straight the sons prepare  
For open force, and rush to sudden war  
Meeting like winds broke loose upon the main  
To prove by arms whose fate it was to reign.

As soon as the news of the dangerous illness of Shah Jahan reached the various princes, all of them started making preparations for capturing the throne. Shah Shuja and Murad took up the imperial title. Both of them placed themselves on the throne and got the coins struck in their own names. However, Aurangzeb moved very cautiously. He took every precaution to conceal his own movements. He established guards over all the ferries over the Narbada. He asked his sister, Roshanara, to inform him of all that happened in the capital. Having done this, he started negotiations with Prince Murad for a joint action against Dara Shikoh. According to the agreement arrived at between the parties, Murad was to receive the Punjab, Kabul, Kashmir and

Sindh and Aurangzeb was to receive the rest of the Mughal territory in India. After this settlement, both the princes marched towards Agra and their armies joined each other outside Dipalpur in Malwa.

An army was sent under Sulaiman Shikoh and Raja Jai Singh to check the advance of Shah Shuja. A battle was fought at **Bahadurgarh** in February, 1658 and Shah Shuja was defeated. Jaswant Singh and Kasim Khan were sent to fight against Aurangzeb and Murad. The **Battle of Dharmat** was fought in April, 1658 between Raja Jaswant Singh on one side and Aurangzeb and Murad on the other. The Rajputs did remarkably well. They pierced the lines of the enemy and rushed up to the place where Aurangzeb and Murad were, and tried to kill them. However, they did not succeed in their attempt. Raja Jaswant Singh was not able to give them adequate help because Qasim Khan who had been sent to assist Jaswant Singh, remained practically idle and only a part of his contingent took part in the fighting. The result was that Aurangzeb was able to surround the attacking Rajputs and they were all put to death. When it became clear that Aurangzeb was going to win, Qasim Khan, Ray Singh Sisodia, Sujan Singh Bundella and Amar Singh Chandravat ran away from the battle-field. Raja Jaswant Singh was inclined to die fighting on the battlefield but his Samants forcibly took him away to Jodhpur. Aurangzeb was able to capture a large number of guns, elephants, tents and other materials. The one remarkable thing about this battle was that out of all the generals killed in the battle, there was only one Muslim general and the rest were all Rajputs. According to Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar, "The hero of the Deccan Wars and the victor of Dharmat faced the world not only without loss but his military reputation rendered absolutely unrivalled in India."

About the causes of the defeat of the Imperialists at Dharmat, the view of V.A. Smith is that it "was due partly to the evils of divided command and jealousy between the Rajputs and the Mussalmans and partly to the bad choice of ground made and the erroneous tactics pursued by the Raja (Jaswant Singh). Qasim Khan did little to help his master's cause and the gallant Rajput clans suffered most of the casualties". It is also pointed out that Qasim Khan considered it derogatory to his pride to have been placed under the command of a Kafir and was offended by the pro-Hindu policy of Dara. In his heart, he was a supporter of Aurangzeb and adopted an attitude of defiance and non-cooperation. The mutual jealousies of the Rajputs also affected the fate of the battle. Aurangzeb was a seasoned general and most of his soldiers and captains were war-scarred veterans. His authority was accepted on all hands and he was superior to Jaswant Singh in his experience and ability as a general.

Aurangzeb reached Gwalior in May, 1658. The hope of Shah Jahan was that his sons would not defy him openly. His view was that the princes should be allowed to come to Agra without

any opposition and if after meeting him they refuse to go back to their respective provinces, the emperor would be able to overpower them easily because it would then be clear to all that they were in open rebellion. This move was not approved of by Dara who was afraid of his own position at the centre. Ultimately, it was decided that Jahanara should exercise her influence with her brothers, but she also failed. Shah Jahan sent a Farman to Aurangzeb asking him not to advance any further. To that Farman, Aurangzeb sent the following reply : "At present your Majesty has no control over political or financial affairs of the state. They have been usurped by the eldest prince. He has always tried to harm me and to close all avenues of profit for me. In order to disrupt my forces, he tried to reduce my ~~me~~ and when after assiduous exertions I reduced the Bijapuris to a plight in which they would have been forced either to pay a heavy ransom or to suffer ransacking of their kingdom, he intervened to force suspension of hostilities and incited the Bijapuris to oppose and defy me... Taking advantage of your Majesty's ill-will against me, he induced you to issue a Farman depriving me of Berar and sent Jaswant Singh at the head of an army to deprive me of the whole of the Deccan. When I realized that your Majesty had lost all control over affairs of the state and at his instigation looked upon your other sons as enemies and issued Farmans to his dictation, I decided, in vindication of my honour, to wait on your Majesty and explain everything to you personally. Jaswant Shingh tried to stand in my way and I crushed his forces. I have now learnt that Shah Buland Iqbal has reached Dholpur intent on war. As he has no chance of success against me, it would be much better for him to retire to his jagir in the Punjab, and leave the service of your Majesty in my hands."

When all attempts at reconciliation failed, it was decided to fight against Aurangzeb and Murad. Dara sent urgent summons to Suleman Shikoh to come back as quickly as possible. However, the **battle of Samugarh** was fought on May 28, 1658, even without the arrival of Suleman Shikoh and Raja Jai Singh who was accompanying him. In the battle of Samugarh about 10 miles east of Agra, the Rajputs fought with vigour and determination. However, most of the Muslim generals of Dara played him false. Both Aurangzeb and Murad fought in front of the armies and staked their very lives. The balance was in favour of Dara when the elephant on which he was riding was wounded by an arrow. He foolishly accepted the advice to mount on horseback. When his troops found him missing from the elephant, they took him dead. According to V. A. Smith, "That action decided the fate of the battle. The soldiers of Dara ran away from the battle-field and victory lay with Aurangzeb and Murad." There was some resistance at Agra. After that, the Fort was surrendered in June 1658 by Shah Jahan. It is stated that when as a sort of an offensive measure against the defenders of Agra Fort, Aurangzeb stopped the supply of water from the Jamuna, Shah Jahan had to satisfy his thirst with brackish water from the wells within the Fort. It was at that time that he wrote the following lines to Aurangzeb :

"Praised be the Hindus in all cases,  
As they even offer water to their dead.  
And thou, my son, art a marvellous Mussalman,  
As thou causest me in life to lament for lack of water."

Shah Jahan was made a prisoner and he died in captivity in 1666.

One by one, Aurangzeb managed to dispose of all his brothers. So far as Murad was concerned, he was invited to a dinner and arrested while drunk. First of all, he was sent to Delhi and then to Gwalior. It was there that he was executed in 1661. This was done on a charge of murder levelled against Murad by the son of one Ali Naqi at the instigation of Aurangzeb. The son demanded justice against Murad for having shed the blood of his innocent father. Ali Naqi had been sent by Shah Jahan as Revenue Minister to Murad when he was the Governor of Gujarat. When Shah Jahan fell ill and Murad crowned himself at Ahmedabad, the enemies of Ali Naqi forged a letter under his seal professing his allegiance to Dara Shikoh. When Murad saw that letter, he called Ali Naqi and without hearing him, himself speared him to death.

As regards Shuja, he raised the standard of revolt and occupied Banaras, Allahabad and Jaunpur. With the help of Mir Jumla, Shah Shuja was defeated. After his defeat, Shuja ran away to Arakan. He was killed by the Maghs.

As regards Dara, he retreated from Samugarh to Delhi and from there to Lahore. Multan was the next destination. From Multan, he went to Thatta. As he was not welcomed there, he went to Cutch. From there he went to Kathiawar where he was welcomed by Shah Nawaz Khan, the Governor of the Province. He helped Dara to occupy Surat. Dara was also able to raise a large army and if he had accepted the advice of his friends, he could easily have escaped to the Deccan where it would have been difficult for Aurangzeb to crush him. Unfortunately, he made up his mind to give battle to the pursuing army. The result was that he was defeated at Ajmer. After his defeat, he ran away to Sindh. Unfortunately, he got shelter from Jiwan Khan who treacherously handed him over to the pursuers in June, 1659. Dara was brought to Delhi. He was placed on a filthy elephant and paraded in the streets of Delhi. Bernier who saw the scene describes the same in these words: "I took my station in one of the most conspicuous parts of the city, in the midst of the largest bazar; was mounted on a good horse and accompanied by two servants and two intimate friends. From every quarter I heard piercing and distressing shrieks, for the Indian people have a very tender heart; men, women, and children waiting as if some mighty calamity had happened to themselves. Gion Khan (Jiwan Khan) rode near the wretched Dara, and the abusive and indignant cries, vociferated as the traitor moved along, were absolutely

deafening. I observed some Fakirs and several people throw stones at the infamous *Patan*; but not a single movement was made, no one offered to show his sword with a view of delivering the beloved and compassionated Dara." He was put on his trial as an apostate from Islam and a verdict of death was given against him. According to Smith, "On the night of that day (August 30), brutal murderers tore away Sipihir Shikoh from his father's embrace and after a violent struggle beheaded Dara Shikoh."

Even after disposing of his three brothers, Aurangzeb did not find himself safe. Sulaiman Shikoh had defeated Shah Shuja in the Battle of Bahadurgarh in 1658. On account of his slow movement, he had not been able to join his father and take part in the Battle of Samugarh. The result was that after the defeat of Dara in the Battle of Samugarh, he had to run for his life to Garhwal where he was given shelter by a local chief. Pressure was put on the chief and in December, 1660. Sulaiman Shikoh was handed over to Aurangzeb. Sulaiman Shikoh was sent as a prisoner to the fort of Gwalior and there he was put to death "by the slow process of *Post* or infusion of opium poppy-heads." Sipihir Shikoh, another son of Dara, was lucky. He was later on married to one of the daughters of Aurangzeb.

### **Causes of Success of Aurangzeb**

(1) The victory of Aurangzeb over his rivals was due to many factors. According to the Muslim historians, that was due to the *Iqbal* of Aurangzeb. But leaving aside this factor, Aurangzeb's success was partly due to his own qualities of head and heart. He was a great general and a statesman. No one could equal him in diplomacy and statecraft. He was a staunch Muslim and no wonder the orthodox Muslims of India not only prayed but also worked for his victory. Even the Muslims on the side of Dara proved treacherous to him and his cause and the Muslims on the side of Aurangzeb fought for his cause with determination and enthusiasm. They considered Aurangzeb as the champion of Sunni orthodoxy.

(2) The success of Aurangzeb was partly due to the folly and weakness of Shah Jahan. He did nothing to check the spread of the news that he was dead. As soon as he heard of the advance of Murad and Aurangzeb, he ought to have put himself at the head of the Mughal forces and defeated them. There is nothing to doubt that many of the followers of Aurangzeb would have deserted him on the appearance of Shah Jahan himself in public. The reason was that in such a case there was no occasion for a war of succession. Such a fight could have meaning only if Shah Jahan was dead. Shah Jahan ought to have prevailed upon Dara to allow him to be in the battle-field at Samugarh. He foolishly submitted to the dictates of Dara, and he had to pay dearly for that folly. He had to spend 8 years in prison.

(3) Dara was no match for Aurangzeb in any way. The latter was much better than the former in diplomacy, generalship and statecraft. Dara lacked the reckless courage which was

possessed by Aurangzeb. Dara should not have got down from his elephant and he should not have put himself on a horseback at Samugarh. He should have changed one elephant for the other. Moreover, Dara should not have gone out to give battle to Murad and Aurangzeb till the victorious Mughal army under Sulaiman Shikoh and Raja Jai Singh had returned. If he had waited for that army, he would have got better chances of success on account of his military strength. By his action, the army under Sulaiman Shikoh and Jai Singh became useless.

(4) The artillery of Aurangzeb proved more useful than that of Dara. Foolishly, Dara advanced beyond his own artillery and thereby made it useless.

(5) There was lack of co-operation between the Rajput and Muslim armies under Dara. The result was that they could not fight effectively. However, Aurangzeb used better tactics than those of Dara. Aurangzeb kept a part of his troops in the reserve and used them only when the troops of Dara were exhausted. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, the victory of Aurangzeb "was the victory of action over supineness, of intrepidity over inertia, and of organisation and discipline over confusion and incoherence."

### **Art and Architecture under Shah Jahan**

Shah Jahan was a great builder and he has rightly been called "the prince of builders". The architectural style of Shah Jahan's building was different from that of his predecessors. Humayun's Mausoleum, the buildings of Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's Tomb at Sikandara and that of Itimad-ud-Daula at Agra belonged to the Indo-Persian style and architecture. The pre-Shah Jahan buildings were remarkable for their massiveness and strength. On the other hand, the buildings of Shah Jahan have a romantic glitter and effeminate beauty. They are characterised by "elegance rather than by strength and by the lavish use of extraordinary costly decoration." Shah Jahan preferred to use marble instead of red stone used by Akbar and Jahangir in their buildings. Moreover, while there was a mixture of Hindu-Muslim style in the buildings of Akbar and Jahangir, there was no such thing in the architecture of Shah Jahan. In 1632, Shah Jahan completely forbade the building of temples by the Hindus.

One of the greatest achievements of Shah Jahan was the building of the Taj on the banks of the river Jumna. This was built in the memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal. It cost a lot of money. According to Abdul Hamid Lahori, the building of the Taj cost Rs. 50 lakhs and about 12 years were spent in completing it. According to Travenier, the Taj was completed in 22 years and cost more than Rs. 3 crores.

Shah Jahan built a large number of buildings in the Agra fort. Special mention may be made of the Moti Masjid and Musamman Burj. The Moti Masjid is to the north of the Diwan-i-Am. Its measurement is 117 by 234 feet. Its construction was started in 1648

and completed in 1652. A total of Rs. 30 lakhs was spent on it. The Musamman Burj is a beautiful structure of marble. It is here that Shah Jahan died in prison.

Shah Jahan laid the foundations of Shahjahanabad in May 1639. There was a lot of pomp and show on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the building. Jami Masjid is one of the largest mosques in India. It took 6 years to complete it. It cost a sum of Rs. 10 lakhs.

The tomb of Nizam-ud-Din Auliya was built of pure white marble. A few buildings were built at Ajmer. Reference may also be made to the Peacock Throne. It cost him Rs. 19 crores. It was of solid gold studded with costly jewels.

It is pointed out that the reign of Shah Jahan was the Golden Age of the Mughal period. The Mughal Empire reached its high watermark in his time. There was peace and prosperity in the country. Land was fertile and the revenues of the state were abundant. Export trade was carried on profitably. No wonder, Shah Jahan built a large number of buildings which were undoubtedly masterpieces of Mughal architecture.

According to Lane-Poole, "Shah Jahan was renowned for his kindness and benevolence which endeared him to the people." According to Hunter, "The Mughal Empire attained its highest union of strength and magnificence under Shah Jahan." According to Khafi Khan, "Although Akbar was a conqueror and a lawgiver, yet for order, arrangement of territory and finances and the good administration of every department of the state, no prince ever reigned in India that could be compared to Shah Jahan." Shah Jahan was a just ruler. He appointed upright people as judges so that justice may be done to the people. Shah Jahan led a strenuous life and gave peace, prosperity and contentment to his people. According to Manucci, "He kept his eye on his officials punishing them rigorously when they fell short of their duties. This was the reason why he kept at his court an official with several baskets full of poisonous snakes. He would order that in his presence they should be made to bite any official who had failed to administer justice, leaving the culprit lying in his presence till the breath left him." *Chor Minars* were constructed and the heads of the thieves were exhibited in them.

### **Foreign Travellers in the Time of Shah Jahan**

Many foreign travellers visited India in the time of Shah Jahan. Bernier and Travenier were two Frenchmen and they visited the country practically at the same time. Manucci was an Italian adventurer. As regards Bernier, he was a French physician and he visited India at the time when the struggle was going on in the country among the four sons of Shah Jahan. He wrote a book called "The War of Succession of 1658." He has tried to give a graphic picture of the sufferings of Dara when he was being pursued by the armies of Aurangzeb. As regards the condition of India, Bernier tells us that

the people were not at all destitute of good laws although high officials could disregard them with impunity. The chief men in the country were opportunists and time-servers. Provincial Governors were rapacious, oppressive and ambitious. The people were demoralised and spiritless. The peasantry was completely crushed. He also refers to the law of escheat by which all the property of a noble was taken over by the king at the time of his death. The whole of the administration depended upon the will of the Mughal Emperor. He could raise anybody and also pull him down. To quote Bernier, "The country is ruined by the necessity of defraying the enormous charges required to maintain the splendour of a numerous court and to pay a large army maintained for the purpose of keeping the people in subjection. No adequate idea can be conveyed of the sufferings of the people. The cudgel and the whip compelled them to incessant labour for the benefit of others." Travenier praised the Government of Shah Jahan in these words: "He reigned not so much as a king over his subjects but as a father over his family and children. He excelled other monarchs in good administration and in the order and arrangements and finances as well as the system of justice which was stern." Manucci has given us a lot of information about the King and the people of India. There are a lot of interesting anecdotes in his account. There may be a lot of exaggeration in what he wrote about the King and the people of India, but according to him, Shah Jahan gave peace, prosperity and contentment to his people.

### Estimate of Shah Jahan

Undoubtedly, Shah Jahan was one of the greatest rulers of the Mughals and his reign has rightly been called the Golden Age of the Mughals. He was a great soldier and general. He had given proof of his qualities of generalship during the reign of his father and that of his own. He was a great builder and the buildings at Delhi and Agra are standing monuments of his achievement. He was a great administrator and statesman. He systematised the administration, particularly the Mansabdari system. He reduced the salaries of the Mansabdars and forced them to keep the number of troops prescribed for their ranks. He increased the land revenue by enhancing the state demand from one-third to one-half. He was a very hard-working man. However, in religious matters, he was a bigoted Muslim. In a way, he anticipated his son, Aurangzeb.

According to V.A. Smith, "Shah Jahan has received from most modern historians and specially from Elphinstone, treatment unduly favourable. The magnificence of his court, the extent and wealth of his Empire, the comparative peace which was preserved during his reign, and the unique beauty of his architectural masterpiece, the Taj, have combined to dazzle the vision of his modern biographers, most of whom have slurred over his many crimes and exaggerated such virtues as he possessed. As a son, he failed in his duty, remaining in rebellion for years. He mercilessly exterminated his collateral male relations, beginning with his elder

brother, Khusrau in order to clear his own path to the throne. As a father, he displayed undue partiality for his first-born son, and showed little capacity for control over his family. The brightest feature in his character as a man is his intense love for Mumtaz Mahal, the mother of fourteen of his sixteen children. Probably he restrained his passions during her lifetime, but she died early in his reign (1631), and there is no doubt that during the remaining thirty-five years of his life, he disgraced himself by gross licentiousness. In affairs of state, he was cruel, treacherous and unscrupulous, perhaps not worse than most other kings of his time, but certainly no better. He had little skill as a military leader. The loss of Kandhar and the triple failure to recover that important position prove the inefficiency of the organisation and command of his army." Again, "Whatever be the view taken of the personal character of Shah Jahan or the efficiency of his administration, it can hardly be disputed that his reign marks the climax of the Mughal dynasty and Empire. During the space of 30 years (1628-58), the authority of the Emperor was not seriously challenged and the realm was never invaded by any foreign foe. Although the loss of Kandhar and the failure of three attempts to retake it proved military inefficiency and encouraged Persian pride, these events had little effect on India where the strength of the army sufficed to uphold the imperial system. It is true that Shah Jahan's son, Aurangzeb Alamgir, largely extended the Southern frontier of the Empire during the first thirty years of his reign, but it is also true that long before the annexation of the Sultanates in the Deccan, the Marathas had searched out the weak places in the Imperial armour and the erroneous policy of the sovereign had undermined the foundations of the throne. The empire which had suffered severely from the prolonged wars of succession may be regarded as declining throughout the whole reign of Aurangzeb notwithstanding his conquests in the South."

According to Elphinstone, "Khafi Khan, the best historian of those times, gives his opinion that although Akbar was pre-eminent as a conqueror and a lawgiver, yet for the order and arrangement of his territory and finances and the good administration of every department of the state, no prince ever reigned in India that could be compared to Shah Jahan...

"Those who look on India in its present state may be inclined to suspect the native writers of exaggerating its former prosperity; but the deserted cities, ruined places, and choked up aqueducts which we still see, with the great reservoirs and embankments in the midst of jungles, and the decayed causeways, wells and caravan-serais on the royal roads, concur with the evidence of contemporary travellers in convincing us that those historians had good grounds for their commendation...

"Shah Jahan was the most magnificent prince that ever appeared in India. His retinue, his state establishments, his largesses, and all the pomp of his court, were much increased beyond

the excess they had attained to under his predecessors. His expenses in these departments can only be palliated by the fact that they neither occasioned any increase to his exactions, nor any embarrassment to his finances...

"Notwithstanding the unamiable character given to him in his youth, the personal conduct of Shah Jahan seems to have been blameless when on the throne. His treatment of his people was beneficent and paternal, and his liberal sentiments towards those around him cannot be better shown than by the confidence which (unlike most Eastern princes) he so generously reposed in his sons."

According to Dr. Tripathi, "The reign of Shah Jahan was prosperous. The Peacock throne and the glitter of jewels dazzled the foreign travellers. The Taj Mahal, the Pearl Mosque, the Ali Masjid of Shahjahanabad, the fort of Shahjahanabad stand to this day to testify to the greatness of Mughal Empire and the glory of his reign. The gardens in Delhi, Lahore and Kashmir prove his love for plants and flowers and springs. It was in his reign that Ali Mardan Khan cut the Ravi Canal of ninety-eight miles and brought it to Lahore, and the Nahri Shahab or the old Firoz canal which had silted up was not only reopened but was extended by sixty miles and named Nahri Bihisht. Khafi Khan says that in the whole line of the Timurides there was no ruler who could equal Shah Jahan in organization, improving the treasury, settlement of the country, and due recognition of the merits of officers and soldiers. He was always keen to protect the ryots and suppress tyranny. During his period, 'profound peace reigned. The peasantry was carefully cherished; harsh and exacting governors were in many cases dismissed on the complaint of the people.' He was 'stern in punishing oppressive tax collectors and erring, if at all, the side of excessive leniency.'"<sup>1</sup>

Edwardes and Garrett point out that the reign of Shah Jahan was outwardly a period of great prosperity. Foreign wars were few and unimportant. There was peace and apparent plenty at home. The royal treasury seemed full to overflowing. Yet despite the vast treasure which Shah Jahan had inherited from his father and grandfather, despite the growth of trade between India and Western Asia, despite the establishment of the export trade with Europe and in spite of other apparent advantages, the reign of Shah Jahan sounded the knell of the Empire and of its economic system. To meet the expenditure of Shah Jahan's extravagant bureaucracy and to pay for the splendid architectural monuments, an insupportable burden was put on the agricultural and industrial classes upon whom the very life of the Empire ultimately depended. Thus was engendered the national insolvency which later on proved one of the most potent factors in the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. Moreover, the liberal and catholic spirit which had guided Akbar was given up when the power of the Mughals seemed to be firmly established. In his zeal for Islam, Jahangir shed the blood of the

1. *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, p. 500.

Jains of Gujarat and Shah Jahan followed a similar policy when he destroyed the Hindu shrines at Banaras and other places. That policy was brought to fruition by Aurangzeb who not only persecuted the Hindus but also destroyed the Shia Sultans of the Deccan (*Mughal Rule in India* pp. 99-100).

Sir William Forster says : "All the writers of the period extol the splendour of his (Shah Jahan's) court, the liberality of his rule, and his personal popularity. At the same time they do not conceal the fact that this splendid facade hid a crumbling interior. Such extravagant expenditure was a crushing burden upon the resources of the country ; while the venality of the officials, and the tyrannical caprice of the local governors added to the misery of the people, who had little or no means of obtaining redress." (*English Factories in India, 1655-60*, pp. 1-2).

Shah Jahan was not essentially an excessively pleasure-seeking ruler. However, he was severe and unsparing towards his rivals. The way he put himself on the throne, left many unpleasant memories. But if we take into consideration the times in which he was living, "we lose half our rage in the pressure of circumstances that drove him to such a ghastly step" (Dow). "For these early crimes, he had made ample amends by the strict justice and clemency of his government and his solicitude for the well-being of his subjects."

The following couplet has been written in praise of Shah Jahan :

O King, Thy subjects are light hearted  
Because thou hast taken a heavy load  
On the shoulders, oppression has fallen  
Into a deep sleep in thy kingdom, because  
Thou hast banished sleep from thy eyes.

However, Dryden describes the sunset of the glorious career of Shah Jahan in these words :

Oh ! had he still that character maintained,  
Of valour, which in blooming Youth he gain'd  
He promised in his East a glorious Race ;  
Now sunk from his Meridian, sets a pace.  
But in the Sun, whom he from Noon declines,  
And with abated heat less fiercely shines,  
Seems to grow milder as he goes away.  
Pleasing himself with the remains of Day :  
So he who, in his Youth, for Glory strove,  
Would recompense his age with Ease and Love.

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## CHAPTER VIII

# Aurangzeb Alamgir (1658-1707)

According to Sir J. N. Sarkar, the famous biographer of Aurangzeb, "The history of Aurangzeb is practically the history of India for sixty years. His own reign (1658-1707) covers the second half of the seventeenth century and stands forth as a most important epoch in the annals of our country. Under him the Mughal Empire reached its greatest extent, and the largest single state ever known in India from the dawn of history to the rise of the British power was formed. From Ghazni to Chittagong, from Kashmir to the Karnatak, the continent of India obeyed one sceptre. Islam made its last onward movement in India in this reign. The Empire thus formed, while unprecedented in size, was also one political unit. Its provinces were governed not by the mediation of sub-kings, but directly by servants of the Crown. Herein Aurangzeb's Indian Empire was vaster than that of Asoka or Samudragupta or Harshvardhan." Again, "The life of Aurangzeb was one long tragedy, the story of a man battling in vain against an invisible but inexorable fate. And this tragedy in history was developed with all the regularity of a perfect drama."

After having settled with his brothers, Aurangzeb ascended the throne in July 1658. However, the formal accession did not take place till June 1659. On the latter occasion, Aurangzeb assumed the title of Alamgir. In 1661, he received ambassadors from Persia and Bokhara who were sent to congratulate him on his succession. As all the possible rivals had already been disposed of, Aurangzeb enjoyed comparative peace.

### Early Measures

A reference may be made to some of the early measures adopted by Aurangzeb. There was a lot of confusion in the country on account of the war of succession. The tolls and taxes which the people had to pay, already added to their difficulties and interfered with the trade of the country. The huge armies of the Mughals also damaged the crops of the people on the way. With a view to giving some relief to the people, Aurangzeb abolished the *Rahdari* which was collected on every highway frontier or ferry and brought a lot of money to the Government. He also abolished the Pandari, or ground tax or house-tax. About 80 cesses collected from the Hindus and Muslims were abolished and Khafi Khan mentions only 14. However, in spite of this, these taxes continued to be levied by the Zamindars. Aurangzeb prohibited the use of the *Kalima* on the coins so that the same may not be touched by the non-Muslims. He abolished the

Nauroz which was a borrowed institution from Persia. He appointed Muhatsibs or censors of public morals to look after the conduct of the people and also to see that they acted according to what the Koran said. They were to stop the use of alcohol, intoxicating drugs and other things forbidden by the Holy Koran. Aurangzeb ordered the repair of the mosques and Khanqahs, Imams and Muazzims were regularly paid. Strong measures were taken against those Sufis who were the associates of Dara.

### **Wars on the Eastern Frontier (1661-66)**

Daud Khan, Governor of Bihar, conquered Polaman in December 1661. Mir Jumla had been sent in pursuit of Shah Shuja. He chased him from Bengal to Dacca and from there to the Arakan frontier in May 1663. Aurangzeb appointed Mir Jumla as the Governor of Bengal and encouraged him in his activities. Consequently, Mir Jumla overran Cooch Bihar and Assam. He penetrated into the country with the object of invading the Chinese territory. However, he was driven back by floods, heavy rains and the lack of proper means of transport. He was very much exhausted and died in March 1663.

According to J. N. Sarkar, "No other general of that age conducted war with so much humanity and justice, nor kept his soldiers, privates and captains alike, under such discipline; no other general could have retained to the last the confidence and even affection of his subordinates amidst such appalling sufferings and dangers. The owner of 20 maunds of diamonds, viceroy of the rich province of Bengal, he shared with the meanest soldier the privations of the march and brought premature death on himself by scorning delights and living laborious days. He issued strict orders forbidding plunder, rape and oppression of the people and saw to it that his orders were obeyed."

Shayista Khan was transferred from the Deccan to Bengal as its Governor. The new Governor found that the Portuguese and Burmese pirates were growing very bold and they were carrying their attacks to the sub-division of Dacca. He strengthened the Bengal fleet and then attacked and ultimately compelled the King of Arakan to cede Chittagong in January 1666. The Island of Sondip in the Bay of Bengal was also captured and piracy was put down.

### **Aurangzeb's Illness**

In 1662, Aurangzeb had a serious attack of illness. As a result of it, he was confined to bed for a month. When he improved a little, he went to Kashmir to regain his health. Bernier accompanied Aurangzeb to Kashmir and he has left an excellent account of the journey.

### **North-West Frontier Policy**

Aurangzeb followed a forward policy out of political and economic considerations. The turbulent Muslim tribes were always

a source of danger and trouble to the Mughals. They were attracted by the riches of the Punjab and their poverty forced them to attack India time and again.

To begin with, Aurangzeb tried to silence them by payments of money. However, "even political pensions were not always effective in securing obedience." In 1667, the Yusufzais revolted under their leader, Bhagu. They crossed the Attock river and invaded the Hazara district. Some of them plundered and destroyed the districts of Attock and Peshawar. But their rising was suppressed within the next few months.

In 1672, the Afridis revolted under Akmal Khan. He not only crowned himself as king but also called upon all the Pathans to wage a holy war against the Mughals. He inflicted a crushing defeat on the Mughals at Ali Masjid. Although some of the Mughal officers escaped, yet they lost everything else. The victory enhanced the prestige of Akmal Khan and he got more recruits. "The whole of the Pathan land from Attock to Kandhar" rose in arms. The Afridis were joined by the Khattaks under their leader Khush-hal Khan. The latter "became the leading spirit of the national rising and inspired the tribesmen with his pen and sword alike." In February 1674, the Afghans attacked the Mughal forces under Shujaat Khan and the latter was killed in the battle-field.

Aurangzeb realised the gravity of the situation and took the matter into his own hands. He went to Hasan Abdal in July, 1674, and was able to control the situation by diplomacy and force of arms. Many Afghans were bought over by means of presents, Jagirs, pensions and offices. Amir Khan, the Mughal governor of Afghanistan, also followed a conciliatory policy towards the people. Thus Aurangzeb was able to rehabilitate his position in the North-West Frontier "by following the policy of paying subsidies or by setting up one clan against another—or, to use his own metaphor, breaking two bones by knocking them together." Khush-hal Khan continued the struggle till he was betrayed by his own son into the hands of the Mughals. As a captive, Khush-hal boasted thus: "I am he who has sorely wounded Aurang's heart. Khaiber's pass have I made to the Mughals their dearest purchase."

Sir J. N. Sarkar refers to the effects of the frontier wars in these words: "Ruinous as the Afghan war was to the imperial finances, its political effect was even more harmful. It made the employment of the Afghans in the ensuing Rajput war impossible, though the Afghans were just the class of soldiers who could have won victory in that rugged and barren country. Moreover, it relieved the pressure on Shivaji: by draining the Deccan of the best Mughal troops for the service on the north-west frontier. The Maratha Chief took advantage of this division of his enemy's strength to sweep in a dazzling succession of triumphs through Golconda to the Karnatak and back again through Mysore and Bijapur to Raigarh, during the fifteen months following December

1675. It was the climax of his career : but the Afridis and the Khattaks made his unbroken success possible."

### **Aurangzeb and the Muslim World**

Aurangzeb received "complimentary embassies" from Sharif of Mecca, Kings of Persia, Balkh, Bokhara, Abyssinia, Kashgar, Khiva and Shahri-nau, and the Turkish governors of Basra, Yaman, Mocha and Hadramaut between 1661 and 1667. An ambassador from Constantinople was received in 1690. According to Sir J. N. Sarkar, "His policy at the beginning was to dazzle the eyes of foreign princes by the lavish gifts of presents to them and their envoys, and induce the outer Muslim world to forget his treatment of his father and brothers, or at the best to show courtesy to the successful man of action and master of India's untold wealth, especially when he was free with his money."

### **Aurangzeb, the Puritan<sup>1</sup>**

Reference has already been made to some of the measures adopted by Aurangzeb at the beginning of his reign. However, the subject requires a more elaborate treatment on account of its importance in the life of Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb discontinued the use of the Solar Ilahi year for the purpose of counting his regnal years. In the 11th year of his reign, the court-singers were allowed to be present at the court but music and dancing were forbidden. After some time, they were not allowed even to attend the court. Aurangzeb stopped the practice of Jharokha-Darshana. This was a retrograde step because it deprived the people of an opportunity to get their wrongs redressed directly from the Emperor. It was stopped because it encouraged human worship. In the 12th year of his reign, Aurangzeb stopped the practice of the weighing of his body against gold, silver and other commodities. It appeared to him that such a custom was borrowed from the Hindus. To begin with, Aurangzeb attended the Dussehra celebrations of the Hindus, but later on he gave up the same. To start with, he put on **Tika** on the head of every new Hindu Raja if he was present at the Mughal court. He stopped the practice because it appeared to him that the **Tika** was a Hindu ceremony. He also dismissed the royal astronomers and astrologers. That was done with a view to removing superstition from administration. Scent burners of gold and silver were removed from the court. Silver inkstands were discontinued. Prostitutes and dancing girls were given the option of leav-

1. According to J. N. Sarkar, "The most important feature of Aurangzeb's internal administration was his deliberate reversal of the policy of his predecessors towards his non-Muslim subjects and vassal princes, which change of policy is generally held to have caused the swift downfall of the empire after his death. But with him it was not a matter of personal caprice or earthly gain. According to the orthodox interpretation of the Quranic law, it is the duty of every pious Muslim to 'exert himself in the path of God', or in other words, to wage holy wars (Jihad) against the non-Muslim countries (dar-ul harb) till they are turned into realms of Islam (dar-ul-Islam)" (See *Cambridge History of India*, Vol IV, p. 240).

ing the Mughal Empire or getting married. This regulation did not have much effect as the Mughal nobles could not live without them. The cultivation and public use of **Bhang** was forbidden. Gambling was also prohibited.

Aurangzeb not only forbade singing, but also disallowed public musical parties. Religious music even on the day of the death of the Prophet was not allowed. He made an exception in the case of Shaiku Yahya Chisti, a saint of Ahmedabad. An attempt was made to control the fashions of the day. The length of the beard allowed by the state was fixed. An order was issued that if the beard of any person was longer than the prescribed length, the same was liable to be cut down. According to Manucci, a large number of persons were employed by the state and their duty was to cut the offending beards. Dresses of gold-cloth were disallowed. The length of the trousers was also prescribed by the state. The representation of the figures of birds, animals, men and women on the occasion of Hindu and Muslim festivals, was disallowed. Aurangzeb stopped the practice of lighting lamps on the tombs of the saints of respectable persons. The Khojas were persecuted. Faqir who claimed to be a God, was executed in 1694. Likewise, Hussain Malik was put to death because he used disrespectful language for the companions of the Prophet.

Aurangzeb stopped the celebration of the Muharram in 1669. We are told that the Governor of Ahmedabad was removed because he celebrated the Muharram. Similar action was taken against certain Mansabdars. Likewise, a Portuguese was put to death because he first of all became a convert to Islam but later on became a Christian again. Another person was put to death because he abused the three Khalifas.

The predecessors of Aurangzeb had appointed a large number of Mansabdars from the Hindus. However, he stopped this practice. The number of Hindu Mansabdars fell although the total number of Mansabdars increased. Aurangzeb followed the policy of shutting out the Hindus from the highest offices deliberately. It is true that some Hindus occupied big posts even in the time of Aurangzeb, but in the later half of his reign, they did not fill any high executive or administrative office. The Hindus were not allowed to occupy high administrative jobs. The heads of the various hereditary houses were not given the same status which their predecessors had.

Aurangzeb adopted many measures to break the monopoly of the Hindus in the Revenue Department of the State. A general order prohibiting the employment of the Hindus was passed. This was particularly so with regard to the Revenue Department. The Hindus enjoyed a monopoly in the clerical establishments because most of the Muslims were reserved for royal army. Many Hindus changed their religion and thereby bought the security of tenure of their office. Aurangzeb systematically followed the practice of appointing Muslims in place of the Hindus in various departments of the Government.

The Hindus were not to be the heads of the departments in which the Muslims worked. The Hindus in the army were not allowed to employ Muslim servants.

Aurangzeb ordered the demolition of Hindu temples. In February 1659, he passed the following order in connection with a dispute as to the right of holding charge of the ancient temples of Banaras. "It has been decided according to our canon law that long standing temples should not be demolished but new temples be not allowed to be built.....Our Royal Command is that you should direct that in future no person shall in unlawful ways, interfere with or disturb the Brahmins and other Hindu residents in those places." The temple of Somnath was destroyed early in his reign. In November 1665, he sent an order to his officials in Gujarat for the destruction of such temples as had one time been destroyed or desecrated by him as the Viceroy of Gujarat but later on been restored by the Hindus.

Similar orders seem to have been issued in 1669 to the Governor of Orissa. Thereupon the Governor of Orissa issued the following order to his officials: "To all Fojdars, garrison commanders, accountants, district collectors of revenue and their officials from Katak to Midnapur in the frontier of Orissa.

"The Imperial Bakhshi Asad Khan has sent a letter written according to the instructions of the Emperor to say that the Emperor, learning from the news-letters of the province of Orissa that at the village of Tilkuti in Midnapur a temple has been built, has issued his august mandate for its destruction and the destruction of all temples built anywhere in the province. Therefore, you are hereby commanded with extreme urgency that immediately on receipt of this letter you should destroy the above-mentioned temples. Every temple built during the last ten or twelve years should be demolished without delay. Also do not allow the Hindus and infidels to repair their old temples. Reports of the destruction of temples should be sent to the court under the Seal of Qazis and attested by pious Shaikhs."

Aurangzeb turned his attention towards Mathura where a large number of beautiful temples had been built from time to time. The famous temple was that of Keshav Rai. Its railings of stone were built at his own cost by Dara Shikoh. In October 1666, the Faujdar of Mathura removed the railings of that temple.

In 1659, Aurangzeb came to know that the Brahmins of Multan, Sindh and Banaras were using their temples for purposes of instruction. He passed order for the punishment of those who were giving instruction in the temples. According to Massair-Alamgiri, "Orders in accordance with the organisation of Islam were sent to the Governors of all the provinces that they should destroy schools and temples of the infidels and put an end to their educational activities as well as the practice of the religion of the Kufirs."

In August 1669, the temple of Vishwanath at Banaras was completely demolished. The same was the case with the temple of Gopinath at Banaras. Likewise, the temple of Keshav Rai at

Mathura which was built by Bir Singh Bundela at a cost of Rs. 33 lakhs, was levelled to the ground and a mosque was built on its site.

In 1679, orders were passed for the sequestration of the state of Jodhpur after the death of Maharaja Jaswant Singh. Khan-i-Jahan destroyed many temples and brought cart-loads of gold from those temples to Delhi. When the Rajput war started, the Maharana of Udaipur ran away and the temple in front of his palace was destroyed. Likewise, temples on the edge of Udaipur Lake were also destroyed. In all, 235 temples were destroyed in the state of Udaipur.

Orders were also passed for the destruction of the Hindu temples in the state of Jaipur. While one of the temples was being demolished, there was stiff resistance by the Rajputs and till all of them were killed the work of demolishing could not proceed. About 66 temples were destroyed in Amber. When Aurangzeb marched from Amber to the Deccan, he ordered the destruction of all the temples on the way. This was one of the special duties of the Superintendent of labourers with the Army.

After the conquest of Golconda and Bijapur, the temples in those states were destroyed and mosques were built out of the same material. Aurangzeb appointed an officer on special duty to destroy the Hindu temples in Maharashtra. He also stopped worship at the Hindu temple of Dwarka. Likewise, temples at Hardwar and Ayodhya were destroyed.

Aurangzeb issued many punitive regulations against the Hindus. The pilgrimage tax which had been abolished in the time of Akbar was reimposed on the Hindus. This brought a lot of money to the state treasury. The celebration of the Hindu festivals was banned. From 1665, the Holi festival ceased to be celebrated. In the same year, the celebration of Diwali was stopped. In 1703, the Hindus were not allowed to burn their dead on the banks of the river Sabarmati in Ahmedabad. Similar restrictions had been imposed in 1696 at Delhi in connection with the Jumna. Fire-works of all kinds were prohibited. It was ordered that the Hindus were not to look like Muslims. An order of 1694 laid down that with the exception of the Marathas and Rajputs, no Hindu was to ride on an Iraqi or Turani horse or an elephant or to use a palanquin. A Hindu of Multan violated this order and his horse and saddle were confiscated by the state. However, the exception with regard to the Marathas was not strictly enforced. Orders were passed in 1702 that Muslim engravers were not to engrave the names of Hindu gods and goddesses on the seals of the rings of the Hindus. It was ordered in 1665 that the Muslims were to pay half the custom duties realised from the Hindus. Two years after, customs duties were abolished altogether from the Muslims. As the privilege was abused by the Muslims, they were ordered to pay once again half of the customs duties paid by the Hindus. A tax on produce from gardens was realised at the rate of 20% from the Hindus and 16.6% from the Muslims.

However, the worst of all was the imposition of the **Jizya** on the Hindu in April 1679. This was done on the representation of Anayat Khan, Diwani Khalsa. The **Jizya** was to be paid by all the non-

Muslims in India. Even the Brahmins were not exempted. The same was realised from the Indian states also. No distinction was made in favour of officials, clerks or soldiers. Every Hindu was required to pay the **Jizya** personally. He was to come before the collector personally and then make the payment. The payment could not be made through a deputy. There was a lot of humiliation at the time of the payment of the **Jizya**.

Elaborate arrangements were made for the assessment and collection of **Jizya**. There were three grades of assessment : (1) A Hindu whose property was worth 200 Dirhams paid 12 Dirhams as **Jizya**. It was about 6% of the property. (2) Persons whose property varied from 200 Dirhams or Rs. 52 to Rs. 2,500 paid 24 Dirhams. (3) Persons whose property was worth more than 10,000 Dirhams, paid a lump sum of 48 Dirhams. It is evident that the incidence of the **Jizya** was less in the case of the rich. However, the rich paid the whole amount in a lump sum and the others could pay in instalments. There were certain exemptions from the **Jizya**. Minors, women, beggars, slaves, the blind, the crippled, the mentally deficient and the unemployed were not required to pay. In very exceptional cases, **Jizya** was also remitted by the state.

The **Jizya** was a part of the anti-Hindu policy of Aurangzeb. Its object was to have converts to Islam by harassing the Hindus. Any Hindu could escape from the **Jizya** by becoming a Muslim. No wonder, a large number of Hindus were converted to Islam in this way. This fact is confirmed by Manucci.

Khafi Khan refers to the following instructions of Aurangzeb to the Collectors of **Jizya**. "You are free to grant remission of revenue of all other Hindus, but if you remit any men's **jizya** which I have succeeded with great difficulty in laying on the infidels, it will be an impious change (bidate) and will cause the whole system of collecting the poll-tax to fall into disorder." Khafi Khan tells us that thousands of Hindus of Delhi gathered together to protest against the imposition of **Jizya**. As Aurangzeb could not tolerate the agitation by the Hindus, he gave them an hour's notice to disperse. As they did not obey, he ordered the elephants to run over them and consequently a large number of Hindus were killed.<sup>1</sup> The zeal with which **Jizya**

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1. To quote Khafi Khan, "Upon the publication of this order, the Hindus all round Delhi assembled in vast numbers under the jharokha of the Emperor on the river front of the palace, to represent their inability to pay, and to pray for the recall of the edict. But the Emperor would not listen to their complaint. One day when he went to public prayer in the great mosque on the sabbath, a vast multitude of Hindus thronged the road from the palace to the mosque, with the object of seeking relief. Money changers and drapers, all kinds of shop-keepers from the Urdu bazar, mechanics, and workmen of all kinds, left off work and business, and pressed into the way. Notwithstanding the fact that orders were given to force a way through, it was impossible for the Emperor to reach the mosque. Every moment the crowd increased, and the Emperor's equipage was brought to a standstill. At length an order was given to bring out the elephants and direct them against the mob. Many fell trodden to death under the feet of the elephants and horses. For some days the Hindus continued to assemble in great numbers and complain, but at length they submitted to pay the **Jizya**."

was collected by the fanatical officers is shown by the conduct of one Mir Abdul Karim who was the prefect of the city of Burhanpur. It is stated that "he increased the yield of the tax from 26,000 a year for the whole city to more than four times the amount in the three months for half the city only (1682)."

Aurangzeb employed many other ways to have converts to Islam. Converts to Islam were given recognition by the Emperor. They were given high posts in the state. Thousands of Hindus were removed from the various departments of the Government and Muslims were recruited in their places. They were given the option of retaining their jobs if they became converts to Islam. Rebels were pardoned if they became Muslims. If there was a quarrel between two persons and one of them became a Muslim, he who became a Muslim got the property. "If a Mohammadan had no desire to discharge his debt to the Bania and if the Bania demanded the payment of the same, the Mohammadan would lodge a complaint to the Kazi that he had called the prophet names or spoken contumaciously of their religion, produce a false witness or two, and the poor man was forced to circumcision and made to embrace Islam. Several persons had been thus served to the great terror of all. The king not at all minding anything of his kingdom gives himself wholly upon the converting or rather perverting the Banias."

### **Effects of Anti-Hindu Policy. (a) Rajput War (1679-81)**

The Rajputs revolted in 1679. Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur died at Peshawar in December 1678. At the time of his death, he was in the service of the Mughals. Aurangzeb sent his officers to take possession of his kingdom and set up on the throne a worthless relative of Jaswant Singh who promised to pay him a Nazrana of about Rs. 35 lakhs. When the two widows of Maharaja Jaswant Singh reached Lahore, they gave birth to two sons. Aurangzeb ordered them to be detained at the Mughal court. This was too much for the Rajputs and they decided to rescue them. This was accomplished through the bravery of Durga Das in July 1679. The widows appealed for help to the Rana of Udaipur. The Rajputs made a common cause and the war started against the Mughals. This was continued from 1679 to 1681. To begin with Aurangzeb directed the armies from Ajmer. In 1679, Jodhpur was annexed to the state. The state of Mewar was ruined and the Rana ran away. In the beginning of 1681, Prince Akbar revolted against his father and joined the Rajputs. Aurangzeb tried to create dissensions between Prince Akbar and the Rajputs and for some time he succeeded in his mission. However, truth came to be known to Durga Das who escorted Prince Akbar to the Deccan in May 1681. From there, Prince Akbar ran away to Persia in 1683.

It is true that Aurangzeb made peace with the Rajputs in

1681<sup>1</sup> but he had committed a blunder. In future, he could not count upon the loyalty and active support of the Rajputs. When he went over to the Deccan to take action against the Marathas and the Shia kingdoms of Bijapur and Goleconda, he was all the time afraid of the trouble in Rajputana. Aurangzeb might have fared better in the Deccan if he had not alienated the Rajputs.

According to Lane-Poole, "But while the treaty enabled Aurangzeb to beat a fairly creditable retreat, it did not appease the indignant Rajputs of the West ; even the Rana of Udaipur soon rode his elephants through the treaty ; and all Rajputana, save Jaipur and the eastern parts, was perpetually in a state of revolt until the end of the reign. But for his tax upon heresy, and his interference with their inborn sense of dignity and honour, Aurangzeb might have still kept the Rajputs by his side as priceless allies in the long struggle in which he was now to engage in the Deccan. As it was, he alienated them for ever. No Rajput Raja would again marshal his willing mountaineers to support a Mughal throne, as had been seen in the days of Jai Singh. So long as the great Puritan sat on the throne of Akbar, not a Rajput would stir a finger to save him. Aurangzeb had to fight his southern foes with the loss of his right arm."<sup>2</sup>

According to J. N. Sarkar, "In the height of political unwisdom, Aurangzeb wantonly provoked rebellion in Rajputana while the Afghans on the frontier were still far from being pacified. With the two leading Rajput clans openly hostile to him, his army lost its finest and most loyal recruits. Nor was the trouble confined to Marwar and Mewar. It spread by sympathy among the Hada and Gaur clans. The elements of lawlessness thus set moving overflowed fitfully into Malwa and endangered the vitally important Mughal road through Malwa to the Deccan."

It is to be observed that from 1681 onwards, the struggle between the Rajputs and the Mughals continued till Ajit Singh was recognised in 1709 by Bahadur Shah as the Lord of Mewar. Between 1681 and 1687, Ajit Singh was in concealment and hence the struggle was in the form of a people's war, leaderless, desperate and desultory. From 1687 to 1701, Durga Das and Ajit Singh themselves organized the war of independence with the help of the Hadas of Bundi. Between 1701 and 1707, the struggle entered the last and final stage. More than once, Ajit Singh received imperial rank in order to tide over a crisis. However, when the news of the death of Aurangzeb came, Ajit Singh drove out Jaffar Quli, the Deputy Faujdar of Jodhpur and ascended the throne of his ancestors. The struggle was no doubt exhausting but it was worth the "**blood, sweat, tears and toil.**"

1. According to the terms of the peace, Maharana Jai Singh gave to the Mughals the Parganas of Mandal, Par and Bednor in lieu of the Jizya demanded from his kingdom. The Mughals were to withdraw from Mewar which was to be restored to Jai Singh with the title of Rana and the rank of a commander of five thousand

2. *Aurangzeb*, p. 142.

### (b) Revolt of Satnamis

The Satnamis were originally a militant sect of Hindu worshippers. Mewar and Narnol were their chief centres. Khafi Khan gives the following description about them: "These men dressed like devotees, but they nevertheless carried on agriculture and trade, though their trade is on a small scale. In the way of their religion, they have dignified themselves with the title of 'good name,' this being the meaning of Satnami. They are not allowed to acquire wealth in any but a lawful calling. If any one attempts to wrong or oppress them by force, or by exercise of authority, they will not endure it. Many of them have weapons or arms."

There was a special reason why the religious-minded Satnamis revolted against the Mughal authority. A Satnami cultivator was murdered by a Mughal Piada or foot-soldier. The Satnamis hit back and practically killed the foot-soldier. After that, they revolted. The quarrel soon took a religious colour and assumed the form of a war for the liberation of the Hindus by an attack on Aurangzeb himself. The Faujdar of Narnol was also defeated. The situation became serious and ultimately Aurangzeb sent Radandaz Khan and other generals against the Satnamis and thus it was that they were crushed.

### (c) Rebellion of Gokal

The Jats of Mathura revolted against Mughal tyranny. That was partly due to the fact that Abdun-Nabi-Khan, the Faujdar of Mathura (1660-69), oppressed the Jats very much and also offended their sentiments. The Jats revolted under the leadership of Gokal, a Zamindar of Tilpat, killed the Faujdar and plundered the Pargana of Sadabad. Aurangzeb made preparations for an attack on the Jats and himself proceeded against them. The Jats were defeated and Gokal was captured with his family. According to Sarkar, Gokal's "limbs were hacked off one by one on the platform of the police office of Agra." His family was forcibly converted to Islam. 5,000 Jats lost their lives and 4,000 Mughal soldiers were killed.

In spite of this, there was no peace. The new Faujdar of Mathura was a chip of the old block and he oppressed the people in the same way as Abdun-Nabi-Khan had done. The result was that the Jats revolted once again in 1686 under the leadership of Raja Ram. They were so daring that they plundered Akbar's tomb at Sikandara near Agra in 1688. Ultimately, Raja Ram was defeated and killed. The stronghold of the Jats was captured in 1691. However, the Jats carried on their struggle till the end of Aurangzeb's life under the leadership of Churaman.

### (d) The Bundelas

The Bundela Rajputs considered themselves to be safe on account of "dense forests, the rapid streams, and the steep hills of Central India." Bir Singh Bundela had openly revolted against Akbar in 1602 and Akbar had failed to punish him on account of the guerilla tactics of the Bundelas. Chamrat Rai revolted

against Aurangzeb but he was so much hard pressed that he committed suicide. Chhatrasal, one of the four sons of Champat Rai, "lived to defy the Imperial Government with success." He was hardly 11 at the time of his father's death. He and his brother Angad were employed by Raja Jai Singh in his own contingent and were given promotions on account of their service in the campaign against Shivaji. Chhatrasal was also employed by Dilawar Khan in the Mughal attack against Deogarh. As he felt that his services were not being recognised by the Mughal Government, he "dreamt of taking to a life of adventure and independence in imitation of Shivaji which meant a defiance of the Mughal Government." The people of Bundelkhand and Malwa hailed Chhatrasal "as the champion of the Hindu faith and Kshatriya honour." He won many victories against the Mughals and was able to set up an independent state in Eastern Malwa. He died in 1731 "with the complete effacement of the Mughal rule in the Bundelkhand."

#### (e) The Sikhs

The Sikhs also suffered at the hands of Aurangzeb. After the death of Har Kishan, Teg Bahadur became the 9th Guru of the Sikhs. The new Guru set up his headquarters at Anandpur in the Hoshiarpur District. He visited Patna in 1666. In 1668, he accompanied Raja Ram Singh, son of Raja Jai Singh, to Assam but returned to Anandpur. He was called Sacha Padshah by the Sikhs. He protested against the anti-Hindu policy of Aurangzeb. According to Khafi Khan, "Aurangzeb ordered the temples of the Sikhs to be destroyed and the Guru's agents collecting the tithes and presents of the faithful to be expelled from the cities." Aurangzeb was annoyed on account of the Guru's encouragement of the Hindus to resist his religious policy. The Guru was summoned to Delhi and asked to become a Muslim. He refused to do so and was put to death in 1675 after a lot of torture. Another story is that the Guru was asked to prove his Guruship by a miracle. The Guru wrote a charm on a piece of paper and when his head was cut off from the body, the following words were found written on the paper: "**Sir Diya Sar na Diya**" or "**Sir Diya Din na Diya**."

After the death of Guru Teg Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh became the 10th Guru and he made up his mind to have revenge for the death of his father. Open war started between the Sikhs and the Mughals. Guru Gobind Singh organised the Khalsa into a military organisation. He revolutionized the philosophy of the Sikhs. According to him, "**I shall make men of all four castes into lions and destroy the Mughals**." He organised an army and built forts on the hills. From 1695 onwards he fought successfully against the Rajas of North Punjab and the Mughal officials. Ultimately, he was defeated by the Mughals. Two of his sons were captured and executed with great cruelty. It is stated that when Aurangzeb was nearing his death, he summoned Guru Gobind Singh and promised him good treatment. However, he died in 1707 when Guru Gobind Singh was on his way to meet

him. The Guru was stabbed to death in 1708, by an Afghan. He was succeeded by Banda Bahadur and the latter carried on the struggle against the Mughals.

About the religious policy of Aurangzeb, Sir Wolseley Haig observes: "The religious policy of Aurangzeb was disastrous. His great grandfather had striven to remove the religious and social barriers which divided the various classes of his subjects, and, though exception can be taken to his methods, none can be taken to the end which he had in view. His grandfather, the son of a Hindu mother, held liberal, even lax views on religion. His father was a better Muslim than either Akbar or Jahangir, but except in the case of political offenders, bridled his zeal. But Aurangzeb was a bigot to whom the religion of the great majority of his subjects was anathema, mischief, idolatry, which it was his duty before heaven to persecute, and if possible to stamp out. His methods were iconoclasm, sacrilege, economic repression, bribery, forced conversion and restriction of worship." (*The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p. 334).

### **Deccan policy of Aurangzeb**

Aurangzeb spent the last 25 years of his life (1682-1707) in the Deccan.<sup>1</sup> During all this long period, he had practically no rest. The object of his Deccan wars was to conquer the states of Bijapur and Golconda and crush the power of the Marathas. Unfortunately, the rulers of Bijapur and Golconda were Shias and Aurangzeb as a Sunni was the deadly enemy of the Shias. Aurangzeb also felt that the existence of these states enabled the Marathas to enrich themselves. The Marathas got not only military and administrative experience but also received a lot of money. Aurangzeb must have argued that if those states were annexed to the Mughal empire, the Marathas would not dare to attack them. No wonder, Aurangzeb proceeded in person to put an end to these states.

### **Conquest of Bijapur (1686)**

Sikandar Adil Shah was the ruler of Bijapur. His weakness lay in his youth. In 1682, an expedition was sent against him under Prince Azam, but the same failed and Prince was called back. For two years, Aurangzeb was busy against the Marathas and Prince Akbar. The interval was utilised by the ruler of Bijapur in re-organising his army with the help of Sharza Khan, his minister. Aurangzeb demanded the dismissal of Sharza Khan.

1. According to J. N. Sarkar, "Looking collectively at the Mughal gains in the Deccan during the first twenty years of Aurangzeb's reign, we find that he had in 1657 annexed Kalyani and Bidar in the north-eastern corner of the kingdom of Bijapur; the fort and district of Parenda in the extreme north had been gained by bribery in 1660; Sholapur had been acquired by treaty in July 1668; and now Nuldurg and Gulburga were annexed. Thus the vast tract of land enclosed by the Bhima and Manjra eastwards, up to an imaginary line joining Gulburga to Bidar passed into Mughal hands and the imperial boundary on the south reached the north bank of the Bhima opposite Halsangi, within striking distance of Bijapur city—while south-eastwards it touched Malkhed, the fortress on the western border of the kingdom of the Golconda."

As his order was not complied with, he proceeded against the King in person and besieged Bijapur in April 1685. A breach was made in the fortifications of the city. It is true that the garrison fought very bravely and the Marathas also tried to help the people of Bijapur, but the siege could not last long. The city of Bijapur fell in September 1686. Sikandar Adil Shah was captured and made a prisoner. His kingdom was annexed in 1686 and he himself was taken into the Mughal service. He was made a Mansabdar and allowed a pension of Rs. one lakh. Later on, he was imprisoned in the fort of Daulatabad where he died in 1700.

### **Conquest of Golconda (1687)**

Abul Hasan was the ruler of Golconda and he was not in the good books of Aurangzeb. The cause of Aurangzeb's displeasure was not only the Shia religion of the ruler but also the employment of Hindus in his Kingdom. During the Mughal invasions of Bijapur under Jai Singh in 1665-66, under Diler Khan in 1679 and under Prince Muhammad Azam in 1685, the Sultan of Golconda had openly sent his troops to assist his brother in distress. The first two wrongs were condoned by the payment of tribute but the last one brought ruin on him. Moreover, the Sultan of Golconda had helped Shivaji with the sinews of war after his flight from Agra in 1666 and thus enabled him to recover his forts from the Mughals. He also welcomed Shivaji on his visit to Hyderabad in 1677 and behaved like a humble vassal of the Maratha king, placing a necklace of gems round his horse's neck and promising him an annual subsidy of one lac of **Huns** for the defence of his territory. He made Madanna and Akkanna, two Brahmins, his chief ministers. Aurangzeb himself explained the causes of the war in these words: "The evil deeds of this wicked man passed beyond the bounds of writing, but by mentioning one out of a hundred, and a little out of much, some conception of them may be formed. First, placing the reins of authority and government in the hands of vile tyrannical infidels; oppressing and afflicting the Saiyids, Shaikhs and other holy men; openly giving himself up to excessive debauchery and depravity; indulging in drunkenness and wickedness night and day; making no distinction between infidelity and Islam, tyranny and justice, depravity and devotion; waging obstinate war in defence of infidels; want of obedience to the Divine Commands and prohibitions, especially to that command which forbids assistance to a country the disregarding of which it cast a censure upon the Holy Book in the sight both of God and man. Letters full of friendly advice and warning upon these points had been repeatedly written, and had been sent by the hands of discrete men. No attention has been paid to them; moreover, it had lately become known that a lac of Pagodas had been sent to the wicked Sambha. That in this insolence and intoxication and worthlessness, no regard had been paid to the infamy of his deeds, and no hope of deliverance in this world or in the next."

The war between Golconda and the Mughals dragged on for some time. Ultimately, Aurangzeb himself arrived at Golconda in January 1687 and pressed the siege. Both mining and assaults

failed. Then Aurangzeb had recourse to bribery and gained admittance through the treachery of one of the officers of the garrison who opened a gate. Abul Hasan was captured and made a prisoner. His kingdom was annexed in September 1687.

The fall of Golconda has been described thus : "Before break of day, the Imperial forces attacked the city and frightful scene of plunder and destruction followed ; for in every part and road and market there were lakhs upon lakhs of money, stuffs, carpets, horses, elephants, belonging to Abul Hasan and his nobles. Words cannot express (write Khafi Khan) how many women and children of Mussalmans and Hindus were made prisoners, and how many women of high and low degree were dishonoured, carpets of great value which were too heavy to carry were cut to pieces with swords and daggers and every bit was struggled for."

Reference may also be made to the bravery of Abdur Razzak, one of the ablest officers of Abul Hassan, who remained faithful to his master to the last. He rejected the tempting offers of Aurangzeb and fought bravely in the hand to hand fight at the gateway till he fell with 70 wounds on his body. Aurangzeb was so much impressed by his bravery and fidelity that he appointed one of his surgeons to cure him. Khafi Khan has given the following account of this brave man : "Abdur Razzak Lari heard this and, springing on horse without any saddle, with a sword in one hand and a shield in the other, and accompanied by 10 or 12 followers, he rushed to the open gate through which the imperial forces were pouring in. Although his followers were dispersed, he alone like a drop of water falling into sea, or an atom of dust struggling in the rays of the sun, threw himself upon the advancing foe, and fought with inconceivable fury and desperation shouting that he would fight to the death for Abul Hassan. Every step he advanced, thousands of swords were aimed at him, and he received so many wounds from swords and spears that he was covered with wounds from the crown of his head to the nails of his feet. But his time was not yet come, and he fought his way to the gate of the citadel without being brought down. He received twelve wounds upon his face alone, and the skin of his forehead hung down over his eyes and nose. One eye was severely wounded and the cuts upon his body seemed as numerous as the stars. His horse also was covered with wounds and reeled under his weight, so he gave the reins to the beast and by great exertion kept his seat. The horse carried him to a garden called Nagina, near the citadel, to the foot of an old coconut tree where by the help of the tree, he threw himself off. On the morning of the second day, a party of men belonging to Husaini Beg passed and recognising him by his horse and other signs, they took compassion upon him and carried him upon a bedstead to a house. When his own men heard of this they came and dressed his wounds."

According to Lane-Poole, "With the conquest of Golconda and Bijapur, Aurangzeb considered himself master of the Deccan. Yet the direct result of his destruction of the only powers that made

for order and some sort of settled government in the peninsula was to strengthen the hands of the Marathas.<sup>1</sup> The check exercised upon these free lances by the two kingdoms may have been weak and hesitating, but it had its effect in somewhat restraining their audacity. Now this check was abolished; the social organization which hung upon the two governments was broken up; and anarchy reigned in its stead. The majority of the vanquished armies naturally joined the Marathas and adopted the calling of the road. The local officials set themselves up as petty sovereigns and gave their support to the Marathas as the party most likely to promote a golden age of plunder. Thus the bulk of the population of the two dissolved states went to swell the power of Sambhaji and his highlanders, and the disastrous results of this revolution in Deccan politics were felt for more than a century. The anarchy which desolated the Deccan was the direct forerunner of the havoc wrought by the Marathas in Delhi in the time of Shah Alam and Wellesley."

### **Aurangzeb and the Marathas**

The story of the relations of the Marathas with Aurangzeb is given in the next chapter. Suffice it to say that Aurangzeb sent Shaiyista Khan against Shivaji in 1663, but the latter failed to subdue him and with great difficulty escaped with his life. Later on, Prince Muazzam and Raja Jai Singh were sent against Shivaji. Jai Singh forced Shivaji to sign the treaty of Purandhar in 1665. Shivaji attended the Mughal court at Agra in 1666. Although he was placed under detention, he managed to escape to his headquarters in the Deccan. Prince Muazzam and Jaswant Singh were sent against him.

After the death of Shivaji in 1689, Aurangzeb carried on the struggle against Sambhaji. The latter was arrested and put to death. His son, Sahu, was put in prison where he remained till 1708.

After the execution of Sambhaji in 1680, the struggle was carried on by Raja Ram up to 1700. After his death, the same struggle was successfully carried on by his widow, Tara Bai. In spite of his best efforts, Aurangzeb failed to crush the Maratha resistance. He had completely failed in his mission.

### **Consequences of the Deccan Policy of Aurangzeb**

(1) The Deccan policy of Aurangzeb had far-reaching consequences. If Napoleon could say that "It was the Spanish ulcer which ruined me", Aurangzeb could also say that the Deccan wars not only undid his own work but also those of his predecessors. No wonder, V. A. Smith remarks that the Deccan was not only the grave of his body but also of his Empire. It was foolish on the part of Aurangzeb to have conquered the states of Bijapur and Golconda. It is true that their rulers were Shaiyas, but Aurangzeb ought to have subordinated his religious zeal to states-

1. *Aurangzeb*, pp. 88-89.

manship. He ought to have known that in practical politics many things are done by statesmen which are hardly approved of by them. Anyhow, the annexation of Bijapur and Golconda destroyed the check on the Marathas. It was difficult for Aurangzeb to deal with the Marathas from so distant a place as Delhi. No wonder, he had to spend the rest of his life in the Deccan to subdue the Marathas. It was a fatal step which Aurangzeb took. On account of his absence from the North for a quarter of a century, the administration of the country was thrown out of gear. It led to the break-up of the Mughal Empire after his death. The provincial Governors and Faujdars defied the Central authority and there was nothing to curb them. The result was that towards the end of his life, Aurangzeb could see his own Empire breaking up. A lot of money was wasted in the Deccan wars. At the top of it, when money was most needed to carry on the war in the Deccan, not much could be realised from the various provinces on account of the weakening of the Central authority. It was during this period that the Jats and Sikhs got an opportunity to strengthen their hands.

(2) The operations of the Imperial armies, especially the numerous sieges, led to a total destruction of forests and grass. The huge Mughal forces, totalling 1,77,000 including non-combatants, ate up everything green. The Maratha raiders destroyed whatever they could not carry. They fed their horses on the standing crops and burnt the houses and property which they could not carry on account of their weight. When Aurangzeb retired in 1705, the country presented a scene of utter desolation. According to Manucci, "He left behind him the fields of these provinces devoid of trees and bare of crops, their places being taken by the bones of men and beasts." The total deforestation injured agriculture. The power of resistance of the common man was weakened on account of the long duration of war. Everything they produced or stored up was swept away by the hordes on both sides. The result was that when famine or draught came, the peasants and landless labourers perished helplessly like flies. Scarcity was chronic in the imperial camp and often deepened into famine. Raiding bands were locally formed and many got an opportunity of making money and winning glory. Trade almost ceased in the Deccan during this period. Caravans could travel to the south of the Narbada only under strong escort. Even the Royal mail and baskets of fruits for the Emperor were detained for 5 months at the Narbada. The provincial Governors enriched themselves at the cost of the traders by snatching away their goods and making unreasonable demands on them. Village industries and industrial classes almost died out. The Madras coast was so unsettled by the struggle between the Marathas and the Mughals between 1690 and 1698 that the English and French factors found it difficult to get enough cloth for loading their European-going ships. This led to great economic impoverishment of India. It also lowered the mechanical skill and standards of civilization of the Indians.

(3) The Mughal soldiers on the march destroyed the crops on the way and the government could not and did not compensate the

peasants for their losses. The worst oppressors of the peasants were the servants, day-labourers and other persons who moved with the Mughal armies. Particularly the Baluchi camel-owners who hired their animals to the army and the unattached Afghans searching for employment plundered and bet the countrymen most mercilessly. The Banjaras or wandering graindealers who moved in large numbers, defied the authority of the petty officers of the government and very often looted the people on the wayside and fed their cattle on the crops in the fields with impunity. Even the royal messengers who carried government letters, reports of spies and baskets of fruits for presentation to the Emperor robbed the people of the villages on the way. The land-stewards of the rival Jagirdars of the same village were a menace to the people. The incoming and outgoing Jagirdars had no sympathy for the peasants.

(4) The financial condition of the Mughal empire became so weak that it was on the verge of bankruptcy. Hundreds of soldiers and several officers fell into arrears for three years. The starving men created scenes in the court of the Emperor. Sometimes they abused and beat the business manager of the General. Although the government made reckless promises of money grants, it was humanly impossible to fulfil them. Even when grants in lieu of salary were drawn up by the pay office, they remained for years as orders on paper as the actual delivery of the villages to the grantees was impossible. The interval between the order and the actual possession of the Jagir was long enough to turn a boy into a grey-bearded man. Aurangzeb spent huge amounts on bribing the Maratha officers in charge of hill-forts. It was impossible for the Mughal treasury to meet all the demands.

(5) The spirit of the Mughal army in the Deccan was utterly broken. Soldiers grew sick of the endless and futile war. Even the most trusted officers of Aurangzeb became home-sick. One such nobleman offered the Emperor a bribe of Rs. 1 lakh for transferring him to Delhi.

(6) Sir Jadunath Sarkar has made the following observation with regard to the effects of the Deccan wars: "All seemed to have been gained by Aurangzeb now; but in reality all was lost. It was the beginning of his end. The saddest and most hopeless chapter of his life now opened. The Mughal Empire had become too large to be ruled by one man or from one centre. His enemies rose on all sides; he could defeat but not crush them for ever. Lawlessness reigned in many parts of Northern and Central India. The old Emperor in the far off Deccan lost all control over his officers in Hindustan and the administration grew slack and corrupt; chiefs and Zamindars defied the local authorities and asserted themselves, filling the country with tumult. In the province of Agra in particular, there was chronic disorder. Art and learning decayed at the withdrawal of Imperial patronage; not a single grand edifice, finely written manuscript or exquisite picture commemorates Aurangzeb's reign. The endless war in the Deccan exhausted his treasury; the Government turned bankrupt; the soldiers starving from arrears of pay, mutinied; and during the closing years of his reign the revenue of

Bengal, regularly sent by the able Diwan Murshid Quli Khan, was the sole support of the emperor's household and army and its arrival was eagerly looked forward to. Napoleon I used to say, "It was the Spanish ulcer which ruined me". The Deccan ulcer ruined Aurangzeb."

### **Causes of Aurangzeb's failure in the Deccan**

The main cause of Aurangzeb's failure in the Deccan is to be found in the contrast between the characters of the Mughals and the Marathas. If the Mughals had been the same hardy warriors that Babur led from the valleys of the Hindukush or if the Rajputs had supported them with all their might, the Marathas would have been allowed a short shrift. However, Aurangzeb had alienated the Rajputs and they were not prepared to risk their lives for him who was destroying those who were after all Hindus. Moreover, three or four generations of court-life had ruined the manliness of the Mughals. Instead of hardy swordsmen, they had become padded dandies. They were wadding under their heavy armour. They luxuriated in comfortable saddles and velvet housings and bells and ornaments of their charges. They were adorned for procession when they should have been in rough campaigning out-fit. Their camp was a splendid and luxurious as if they were on guard at the Palace at Delhi. The Mughal soldiers grumbled if their tents were not furnished as comfortable as the quarters at Agra. Their requirements attracted an immense crowd of camp-followers twenty times as numerous as the effective strength. About Aurangzeb's camp at Galgala in 1695, Dr. Careri observes thus : "I was told that the forces in this camp amounted to 60,000 horses and 100,000 on foot, for whose baggage there were 50,000 camels and 3,000 elephants ; but that the sutlers, merchants and artificers were much more numerous, the whole camp being a living city containing five millions of souls and abounding not only in provisions but in all things that could be desired. There were 250 bazars or markets, every Amir or general having one to serve his men. In short, the whole camp was thirty miles about." It cannot be denied that such an army was like a plague of locusts in a country and it ate up everything. Whenever the supplies of Mughal armies were cut by the Marathas, famine followed.

The dilatory tactics of the Mughal generals were also responsible for their failure. It is pointed out that Zul-Fikar, the best of officers of Aurangzeb, held treasonable parleys with the enemy and intentionally delayed a siege in the hope that the aged Emperor would die any moment and leave him in command of the troops. Obviously, such generals and such soldiers were no match for the Marathas. It is true that the Mughals were more in number and resources and they could defeat the Marathas in pitched battles but the Marathas followed guerilla tactics and refused to be drawn into a pitched battle. It is also true that the Mughals could conquer a fort by their lengthy sieges, but the Marathas had many forts and consequently this advantage of the Mughals did not help them much. As the Marathas refused to fight decisive battles,

fighting with them was one long series of petty victories followed by larger losses.

### **Aurangzeb and the English**

From the time of Sir Thomas Roe, the English factors in India followed a policy of friendly relations with the Mughal emperors and the Indian princes. In 1616, the English got permission to build a factory at Masaulipatam. In 1639, Francis Day applied and got from the ruler of Chandragiri a lease of land and later on the famous Fort St. George was built on the same land. Although Shah Jahan took action against the Portuguese, he was friendly disposed towards the English and allowed them to build factories at Hugli and Kasim Bazar in 1650-51. He also gave them certain trade concessions. The English East India Company got the island of Bombay from Charles II in 1668 on an annual rent of £60.

On account of the general insecurity prevailing in the Deccan in the time of Aurangzeb, the English fortified their possessions. In 1684, the Directors approved of the policy of their factors in India and wrote back to say that "though our business is only trade and security, we dare not trade boldly, nor leave great stocks...where we have not the security of a fort."

In 1685, Shayista Khan, Governor of Bengal, imposed local duties upon English traffic. The Company openly defied the authority of Aurangzeb and resisted with force the demands of the Mughal Viceroy. The result was that a sort of semi-official war between the English and the Mughal Empire started. James II, the King of England, was persuaded to send warships to capture Chittagong. The expedition was a total failure. Its only result was to infuriate Aurangzeb. The latter ordered the capture of English factories at Surat, Masaulipatam and on the Hugli. The English factors were forced to leave these places in 1688. This brought the English to their senses. Peace was restored between the parties. The new Governor of Bengal invited Charnock, the chief of the English factory at Hugli, to return to his settlement in 1690. Charnock got the Royal Firman and was allowed to start a small station which later on grew into the present city of Calcutta.

### **Aurangzeb and his sons**

Aurangzeb possessed a very suspicious temperament. He had already disposed of his brothers at the beginning of his reign and he did not place his trust even in his sons. It has already been pointed out that his son Prince Akbar revolted against him and ultimately went away to Persia. Prince Sultan, his eldest son, was kept in prison for about 18 years because he had shown sympathy with Shuja and had also married his daughter. Prince Muazzam who later on succeeded Aurangzeb as Bahadur Shah I, displeased his father on account of his sympathy for the rulers of Bijapur and Golconda. He was imprisoned in 1687 and released in 1695. Kam Baksh, the youngest son, also suffered imprisonment. Aurangzeb kept all his sons away from him and was always suspicious of their movements. Prince Muazzam was sent

to Agra as Governor. Kam Baksh was put in charge of the former territory of Bijapur. Prince Azam was made the Governor of Malwa.

We are told that at the time of the death, Aurangzeb wrote pathetic letters to his sons. To Prince Azam, he wrote thus : "I am grown very old and weak. Many were around me when I was born, but now I am going alone. I know not who I am or why I came into the world. I bewail the moments which I spent forgetful of God's worship. I have not done well for the country or its people. My years have gone by profitless. God has been in my heart ; yet my darkened eyes have not recognised His light. Life is transient, and the lost moment never comes back. There is no hope for me in the future. The fever is gone, but nothing is left of me save skin and dried flesh. The army is confounded and without heart or help, even as I am, apart from God, with no rest for the heart. They know not whether they have a king or not. Nothing brought I into this world but carry with me the burden of my sins. I know not what punishment is to be in store for me to suffer. Though my trust be in the mercy of goodness of God, I deplore my sins. When I have lost hope in myself, how can I hope in others ? Come what will, I have launched my bark upon the waters ! Farewell ! Farewell ! Farewell !"

To Kam Baksh, Aurangzeb wrote thus : "Soul of my soul... Now I am going alone. I grieve for your helplessness. But what is the use ? Every torment I have inflicted, every sin I have committed, every wrong I have done, I carry the consequence with me. Strange that I came with nothing into the world, and now go away with this stupendous caravan of sin ! Whatever I look I see only God. You should accept my last will. It should not happen that Mussalmans be killed and the reproach should fall upon the head of this useless creature. I commit you and your sons to the care of God and bid you farewell. I am sorely troubled. Your sick mother Udaipuri would fain die with me. May the peace of God be upon you."

About these letters, V A. Smith remarks that "the sternest critic of the character and deeds of Aurangzeb can hardly refuse to recognise the pathos of those lamentations or to feel some sympathy for the old man on his lonely death-bed."

### **Character and estimate of Aurangzeb**

It goes without saying that Aurangzeb was an ideal person in many ways. He was simple in his habits and pious in his life. His contemporaries called him a "Dervish clad in the Imperial purple." He was absolutely free from vice and even from the most innocent pleasures of the idle rich. The number of his wives was less than four and he was faithful to wedded love. He possessed a wonderful memory. He never forgot a face he had once seen or a word that he had once heard. He retained all his physical powers to the end. He became a little deaf towards the end and was lame in his right leg. He was a past master in diplomacy. He could not be beaten in any kind of intrigue or secret manipulation. He was a master of the pen and the sword.

Unfortunately, he possessed a suspicious nature. He trusted neither his officers nor his sons. Consequently, he had to do too many things himself. It was impossible for an individual to carry on the work of the administration of the country single-handed and no wonder he failed. He failed in spite of all his talent, skill, and patience. He interfered too much into the work of his subordinates. The result was that his subordinates lost all sense of responsibility and initiative. Such a bureaucracy was not fit to carry on the administration of the country.

Aurangzeb was a practised calligraphist and wrote Shikasta and Nastaliq with great skill. He was a master of Persian and could compose verses. He had no ear for music. He ate very little and slept only for three hours a day. He was a great general and this is proved by his achievements in the life-time of his father. The *Fatwa-i-Alamgiri*, the greatest digest of Muslim law, was compiled under his patronage.

Aurangzeb was intolerant towards the non-Muslims and this fact alone multiplied his difficulties. There was practically no human touch in his dealings. He would have been an ideal ruler if he had been the ruler of a Muslim state. Unfortunately, he was not fitted to rule a country where the bulk of the population was that of non-Muslims. Khafi Khan makes the following observations on Aurangzeb : "Of all the sovereigns of the house of Timur, nay, of all the sovereigns of Delhi...no one, since Sikandar Lodi, has ever been apparently so distinguished for devotion, austerity and justice. In courage, long suffering and sound judgment, he was unrivalled. But from reverence for the injunctions of the law he did not make use of punishment, and without punishment the administration of a country cannot be maintained. Dissensions had arisen among his nobles through rivalry. So every plan and project that he formed came to little good ; every enterprise which he undertook was long in execution and failed of its object."

According to Dr. Smith, when Aurangzeb is judged as a sovereign, "he must be pronounced a failure." His intense suspiciousness poisoned his whole life. He never trusted anybody and consequently was ill-served. His cold, calculating temperament rarely permitted him to indulge in love for man or woman and few indeed were the persons who loved him. His reliance on mere cunning as the principal instrument of statecraft testified to a certain smallness of mind, and moreover, was ineffective in practice. Although he had many opportunities for winning military distinction, he failed to show ability as a general, whether before or after accession. His proceedings in the Deccan during the latter part of his life were simply ridiculous as military operations. In fact, nothing in the history of Aurangzeb justifies posterity in classing him as a great king. His tricky cunning was mainly directed, first to winning, and then to keeping the throne. He did nothing for literature or art. Rather it should be said that he did less than nothing, because he discouraged both.

Lane-Poole has made the following observations with regard

to Aurangzeb: "For the first time in their history, the Mughals beheld a rigid Muslim in their emperor—a Muslim as sternly reprehensible of himself as of his people around him, a king who was prepared to stake his throne for the sake of his faith. He must have been fully conscious of the dangerous path he was pursuing, and well aware that to run a-tilt against every Hindu sentiment, to alienate his Persian adherents, the flower of his general staff, by deliberate opposition to their cherished ideals, and to disgust his nobles by suppressing the luxury of a jovial court was to invite revolution. Yet he chose this course, and adhered to this with unbending resolve through close on fifty years of unchallenged sovereignty."

Again, "All Muhammadan writers extol him as a saint; all contemporary Christians—except Dryden, and he was no historian—denounce him as a hypocrite who used religion as a cloak for ambition, and said prayers to cover the most unnatural murders. Aurangzeb has experienced the fate of his great contemporary, Cromwell, whom he resembled in many features of the soul. He has had his Ludlow among his biographers, and his Baxter, with their theories of selfish ambition and virtue vitiated by success; he has also been slavered with the panegyrics of Muhammadan Flecknoes and Dawbeneyes. These opposite views, however, are less contradictory than might be supposed. They merely represent the difference between Christian bigotry and Muhammadan bigotry. To the Mussalman of India, Aurangzeb is the ideal type of the devout and uncompromising Muhammadan king, and his sanguinary advance to the throne is forgotten in his subsequent zeal for the faith and undeviating observance of the law and practice of Islam. On the other hand, Christian observers of the Great Mughal could not divest themselves of the western idea that a prince who says his prayers in public like the Pharisee in the street, must necessarily be an ostentatious hypocrite; while they failed to reconcile the enormity of fratricide with piety or even common humanity. They did not understand the nature of the religion which could be honestly professed by such a man as Aurangzeb, any more than the royalists of the Restoration could discover in the ambitious regicide the sincere Christian that Cromwell really was."<sup>1</sup>

After referring to the accomplishments of Aurangzeb, J. N. Sarkar observes thus: "But all his long self-preparation and splendid vitality, in one sense proved his undoing, as they naturally begot in him self-confidence and distrust of others, a passion for seeing everything carried to the highest perfection according to his own idea of it, which urged him to order and supervise every minute detail of administration and warfare personally. This excessive interference of the head of the State kept his viceroys and commanders and even 'the men on the spot' in far off districts in perpetual tutelage; their sense of responsibility was destroyed, initiative and rapid adaptability to a changing environment could

1. *Aurangzeb*, pp. 60-61.

not be developed in them, and they tended to sink into lifeless puppets moved to action by the master pulling their strings from the capital. No surer means than this could have been devised for causing administrative degeneration in an extensive and diversified empire like India. High-spirited, talented and energetic officers found themselves checked, discouraged and driven to sullen inactivity. With the death of the older nobility, outspoken responsible advisers disappeared from his council, and Aurangzeb in his later years like Napoleon I after the climax of Tilsit, could hear no contradiction, could bear no unpalatable truth, but surrounded himself with smooth-tongued sycophants and pompous echoes of his own voice. His ministers became no better than clerks possibly registering his edicts.

"Such a king cannot be called a political or even an administrative genius. He had merely honesty and plodding industry. He was fit to be an excellent departmental head, not a statesman initiating a new policy and legislating with prophetic foresight for moulding the life and thought of unborn generations in advance. That genius, though unlettered and often hot blooded, was Akbar alone among the Mughals of India.

"Obsessed by his narrow ideal of duty and supremely ignorant of the real limitations of his character—and not out of political cunning, as Manucci suggests—Aurangzeb practised saintly austerities and self-abasement and went regularly and even ostentatiously through all the observances of his religion. He thus became an ideal character to the Muslim portion of his subjects. They believed him to be a saint who wrought miracles (**Alamgir zinda pir**) and he himself favoured this idea by his acts. **Politically, therefore, Aurangzeb with all these virtues was a complete failure.** But the cause of the failure of his reign lay deeper than his personal character. Though it is not true that he alone caused the fall of the Mughal empire, yet he did nothing to avert it but deliberately quickened the destructive forces always present in rigid theocratic form of government, because he was a reactionary by instinct and no reforming statesman."

A reference must also be made to what Dr. Spear has to say about Aurangzeb. His view is that Aurangzeb has been unduly denigrated. His bigotry has been compared with the tolerance of Akbar and his failure against the Marathas has been compared with the success of Akbar with the Rajputs. He is depicted to be the opposite of Akbar. It is only in Pakistan that he is considered to be the greatest Muslim ruler of India. Dr. Spear says that it should not be forgotten that Aurangzeb ruled India for nearly as long as Akbar did and he left the empire larger than what he found it. Aurangzeb succeeded not because he was more cruel but because he was more efficient and skilful in the game of statecraft. He did not shed blood unnecessarily. He spared the life of his father. He disposed of only those who "touched the sceptre." Once he was on the throne, he proved himself to be a firm and capable administrator. He did not possess the magnetism of Shah Jahan and Akbar but he certainly inspired awe and terror in others.

His life was simple and in this he was superior to the rest of the great Mughals. He was a model Muslim ruler. The view of Dr. Spear is that "his supposed intolerance is little more than a hostile legend based on isolated acts such as the erection of a mosque on a temple site in Benaras." Dr. Spear further points out that towards the end of his reign, Aurangzeb became an ascetic and a sage, a saint according to Muslim estimation. Dr. Spear's verdict is: "The Mughal ogre of popular historians was in fact both a most able statesman and a subtle and highly complex character."

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## CHAPTER IX

# Rise Of The Marathas

It is true that Shivaji contributed a lot towards the rise and growth of the Maratha power in India, but it is equally true that at the time when he appeared on the scene, the ground had already been prepared for him. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "But Shivaji's rise to power cannot be treated as an isolated phenomenon in Maratha history. It was as much the result of his personal daring and heroism as of the peculiar geographical situation of the Deccan country and the unifying religious influences that were animating the people with new hopes and aspirations in the 15th and 16th centuries."

### (1) Physical Features

The physical features of the Maratha country developed certain peculiar qualities among the Marathas which distinguished them from the rest of the people of India. The mountainous territory gave security to the Marathas from outside invaders. It also made them hardy soldiers who were not afraid of difficulties and hardships. The scarcity of rains in Maharashtra and the difficulties of finding livelihood, developed among the Marathas a spirit of self-reliance and hard work. Without these qualities, they would have faced death from starvation. Their hardy character stood them in good stead when they were pitted against the Mughals. While the Marathas could be seen galloping in their small narrow paths in search of their enemies without the least feeling of any inconvenience or hardship, the Mughal soldiers found their life miserable. The mountainous country made it possible for the Marathas to adopt successfully the guerilla tactics. The broken ranges of hills provided the Marathas "ready-made and easily defensible rock forts." "The people were taught to regard the forts as their mother as indeed it was, for thither the inhabitants of the surrounding villages resorted in time of invasions with their flocks and herds and treasure, and in time of peace they afforded a living by supplying the garrisons with provisions and fodder." According to J. N. Sarkar, nature developed in the Marathas "self-reliance, courage, perseverance, a stern simplicity, a rough straight forwardness, a sense of social equality and consequently pride in the dignity of man as man." There were no social distinctions among the people and Maratha women added to the strength and patriotism of men. Elphinstone says, "They (the Marathas) are all active, laborious, hardy and persevering. If they have none of the pride and dignity of

the Rajputs, they have none of their indolence or want of worldly wisdom. A Rajput warrior as long as he does not dishonour his race, seems almost indifferent to the result of any contest he is engaged in. A Maratha thinks of nothing but the result, and cares little for the means, if he can attain his object. For this purpose, he will strain his wits, renounce his pleasures and hazard his person; but has not a conception of sacrificing his life, or even his interest, for a point of honour. This difference of sentiment affects the outward appearance of the two nations; there is something noble in the carriage even of an ordinary Rajput, and something vulgar in that of the most distinguished Maratha. The Rajput is the most worthy antagonist—the Maratha the most formidable enemy; for he will not fail in boldness and enterprise when they are indispensable, and will always support them, or supply their place, by stratagem, activity and perseverance. All this applies chiefly to the soldiery to whom more bad qualities might fairly be ascribed. The mere husbandmen are sober, frugal and industrious, and, though they have a dash of a national cunning, are neither turbulent nor insincere."

## (2) Bhakti Movement

The spread of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra inculcated the spirit of oneness among the Marathas. The main teachings of the leaders were Bhakti or devotion to God and equality of all believers before God without any distinction of class or birth. The Bhakti movement united the people of Maharashtra in a common love of man and faith in one God. The important leaders of the Bhakti movement were Tukaram,<sup>1</sup> Ramdas, Vaman Pandit and Eknath.<sup>2</sup> Ram Das Samarth was considered by Shivaji as his Guru and he exercised a tremendous influence over his countrymen. He rendered yeoman's service by carrying out social reforms. In his book called Dasa Bodh, Ram Das taught the philosophy of Karma or action. He was not only a religious preacher but also a nation-builder.<sup>3</sup> The effect of the Bhakti movement on the Maratha people is described

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1. Tukaram says: "I shall sing the praises of God and gather together his saints. I shall evoke tears even from stones. I shall sing the holy name of God and dance and clap my hands with joy. I shall plant my feet on the brow of death.....I have discovered for you the path across the ocean of life. Come hither, come hither; come great and small; men and women. Take no thought and have no anxiety; I shall carry you all to the other shore. I bear with me certitude to carry you over in God's name!" According to Namdeva, "The people, having found the Yavanas (Muslims) unendurable, are singing the praises of God, for they are even the means of our redemption."

2. Eknath says: "If Sanskrit is derived from the gods, was the mother tongue born of thieves?"

3. Ranade observes: "Ramdas, more than any other saint of Maharashtra, called people's minds to the performance of duty while the heart was to be set on God....No wonder that with this teaching he helped the formation of the Maratha kingdom, as no other saint had done before." His rallying cry was: "Places of pilgrimage have been desecrated; homes of the Brahmins have been destroyed; the entire earth is agitated; Dharma is gone. Hence the Marathas should be mobilised; Maharashtra Dharma should be rallied and filled with a singleness of purpose; sparing no effort, we should crash upon the Maleechas."

by Justice Ranade in these words: "Like the Protestant reformation in Europe in the 16th century, there was a religious, social and literary revival and reformation in India, but notably in the Deccan in the 15th and 16th centuries. The religious revival was not Brahmanical in its orthodoxy, it was heterodox in its spirit of protest against forms and ceremonies and class distinctions based on birth, and ethical in its preference of pure heart and the law of love, to all other acquired merits and good works. This religious revival was the work also of the people of the masses, and not of the classes. At its head were saints and prophets, poets and philosophers, who sprang chiefly from the lower order of society, tailors, carpenters, gardeners, shopkeepers, barbers and even scavengers more often than Brahmins."<sup>1</sup>

### (3) Literature and Language

The literature and language of the Marathas also acted as a unifying force. The hymns of Tukaram were sung by all the classes and they served as a bond of unity among people who belonged to different sections of society. The songs in Marathi dialect and Marathi language played an important part. According to J.N. Sarkar, "Thus a remarkable community of language, creed and life was attained in Maharashtra in the 17th century even before political unity was conferred by Shivaji. What little was wanting to the solidarity of the people was supplied by his creation of national state, the long struggle with the invader from Delhi under his sons, and the Imperial expansion of the race under the Peshwas. Thus in the end a tribe—or a collection of tribes or castes—was fused into a nation, and by the end of the 18th century a Maratha people in the political and cultural senses of the term had been formed, though caste distinctions still remained. Thus history has moulded society."

(4) Even before the appearance of Shivaji on the scene, the Marathas had acquired training in the art of administration and also in the military field.<sup>2</sup> This training the Marathas got in the Muslim states in the Deccan. The Marathas were employed in the Revenue Department of the States. Some of them were appointed even Ministers by the Mohammadan rulers. Murar Rao, Madan Pandit and many members of the Raj Rai family filled from time to time the posts of ministers and Diwans in the Golconda State. Narso Kale and Yesu Pandit were other important persons who served with distinction in the state of Bijapur. Brahman ambassadors were employed on diplomatic duties by the rulers of Ahmednagar. The Maratha Siledars and Bargirs were employed first of all in the Bahmani kingdom and later on in the

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1. *Rise and Growth of the Maratha Power.*

2. Dr. Beni Prasad says: "The chief importance of the Deccan campaigns of the Mughals lies in the opportunities of military training and political power which they afforded to the Marathas. Malik Ambar, who was as great master of the art of guerilla warfare as Shivaji himself, stands at the head of the builders of the Maratha nationality. His primary object was to serve the interest of his own master, but unconsciously he nourished into strength a power which more than avenged the injuries of the South on the northern power."

five states into which it was broken up. The training thus acquired in arms and civil administration brought to the Marathas education, power and wealth. It is a matter of history that a very prominent part was played in the politics of Ahmednagar and Bijapur by the Maratha jagirdars, Shahji Bhonsla and Murar Rao Jogdev in the time of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. It has rightly been stated that "the nominal Mohammadan rulers of Golconda, Bijapur, Bidar etc., were virtually controlled both in the civil and military Departments by Maratha statesmen and Maratha warriors and the hill forts near the Ghats and the country thereabout were in the hands of Maratha jagirdars who were only nominally dependent upon these Mohammadan sovereigns."

### Shivaji's Early Life

It was in this atmosphere that Shivaji was born in April, 1627. His father's name was Shahji Bhonsla and his mother's name was Jijabai. Shahji Bhonsla had played a very important part in the politics of Ahmednagar and Bijapur. Jijabai was the daughter of Jadhav Rao, the greatest Maratha jagirdar of his time and a descendent of the Yadev rulers of Deogiri. Both from the side of his father and mother, Shivaji was highly connected. Shivaji's mother exercised a tremendous influence on her son. She was a very pious lady and she did a lot to mould the character of her son. She taught her son the stories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and the acts of bravery on the part of the Hindu warriors in the past. She by "her example and teaching did much to stimulate the zeal of her famous son in defence of Brahmins, cows and caste, the three principal objects of Hindu veneration." According to Justice Ranade, "If ever great men owed their greatness to the inspiration of their mothers, the influence of Jijabai was a factor of prime importance in the making of Shivaji's carrier, and the chief source of his strength."

Dadaji Kondadev also played an important part in the life of Shivaji. He was the administrator of the estates of Shivaji's father in Poona. The administrator loved Shivaji as his son. He gave him training in the art of riding, fighting etc. He also taught him the art of administration.

Both Ram Das and Tuka Ram had their influence on the life of Shivaji. Ram Das was virtually regarded by Shivaji as his Guru or spiritual guide or philosopher. The Guru Mantra or the sacred formula which Ram Das whispered into the ears of Shivaji was the love of his country and nation. "Mother and mother country are dearer than heaven itself. Gods and cows, Brahmins and the faith, these are to be protected; therefore, God has raised you up; when faith is dead, death is better than life; why live when religion has perished? Gather ye, therefore, the Marathas together; make the dharma live again; for otherwise our forefathers will laugh at us from Heaven."

Such was the training and such was the environment in which Shivaji started his work. In the youth, he made himself thoroughly familiar with the hilly country around Poona. He also mixed

freely with the Mawali chiefs of his own age. Their friendship proved of great value to him later on. He got his best soldiers from them. The Mawalis were hardy and brave people and were well-acquainted with every nook and corner of the country. This helped them a great deal when they were pursued by the Mughals and the forces of Bijapur.

### Conquests

Shivaji started his career of conquests and progress at the early age of 19. According to Rawlinson, "There seems to be little doubt that his career was inspired by a real desire to free his country from what he considered to be a foreign tyranny, and not by a mere love of plunder." According to Sarkar, "A career of independence was no doubt risky to Shivaji, but it had undreamt of advantages to compensate for the risk if only he could succeed." Shivaji took advantage of the confusion prevailing in Bijapur and in 1646 captured the fort of Torna. After this, the fort of Raigarh was captured and almost wholly rebuilt. Then he snatched Supa from his uncle, Shambhaji Mohite. After the death of Dadaji Kondadev, Shivaji took over the whole of the estate of his father. He also brought the forts of Baramati and Indapura under his direct control. He also captured Purandhar and Kondana. When these activities of Shivaji came to the notice of the ruler of Bijapur, it was decided to take action against him, but the matter was hushed up on account of the intervention of the ministers who represented that those forts were captured for the protection of the family jagir.

After this Shivaji directed his attention towards the Konkan. The Marathas under Abaji Sonder took possession of the important town of Kalyan in that region. After that, Abaji marched southwards in the Kolaba district. This was a little too much for the Bijapur Darbar. Once again, it was decided to take action against Shivaji. According to J. N. Sarkar, the father of Shivaji had already been degraded and imprisoned and his Jagir confiscated owing to his insubordination to the Bijapur Commander Nawab Mustafa Khan during the siege of Jinji by the Bijapur troops. Another view is that the father of Shivaji was imprisoned on the ground that he had connived at the acts of aggression of his son. Shivaji did not want to do anything which might endanger the life of his father. He gave up his raids for the time being. He also negotiated with prince Murad, the Mughal Viceroy of the Deccan and expressed a wish to join Mughal service. The Government of Bijapur was alarmed at the diplomatic move of Shivaji and ordered the release of his father. The release was also due to the good offices of certain Muslim nobles of Bijapur. The names of Sharza Khan and Randula Khan are noteworthy in this connection. Shahji was released in 1649. As the release was conditional, Shivaji kept quiet for six years, i.e., from 1649 to 1655. This time was utilised by him in consolidating his power and re-organising his administration.

### Struggle with Bijapur (1657-62)

In November, 1656, Mohammad Adil Shah of Bijapur breath-

ed his last and was succeeded by a youngman of 18. At this time, Aurangzeb was the Governor of the Deccan and he decided to fish in the troubled waters. With the help of Mir Jumla, he conquered Bidar, Kalyani and Parinda in 1657. The Bijapur Darbar made peace with Aurangzeb by surrendering certain districts and agreeing to pay a huge war indemnity. What saved Bijapur was the fact that Aurangzeb had to divert his attention towards Northern India with a view to take part in war of succession which followed in the wake of the illness of Shah Jahan in September, 1657.

### **Shivaji and Afzal Khan (1659)**

As there was no danger from the Mughals, the Government of Bijapur decided to take action against Shivaji. A huge army was collected and Afzal Khan was commissioned to bring back the rebel (Shivaji), dead or alive. Afzal Khan boasted that he would bring the mountain-rat in chains. When he reached the field of operations, he found that fighting in the mountainous country was extremely difficult. Consequently, he decided to send Krishnaji Bhaskar to Shivaji with certain tempting offers. When Shivaji got the letter, he found himself on the horns of a dilemma. He treated the envoy with great kindness and met him at night and appealed to him as a Hindu to tell him the real intention of Afzal Khan. Krishnaji merely hinted that Afzal Khan meant mischief. This was enough for Shivaji and he decided to be on his guard. Military preparations were made to meet the situation that might arise.

Shivaji and Afzal Khan met at the appointed place. Afzal Khan embraced Shivaji and then suddenly tightened his clasp and held the neck of Shivaji in his left arm with an iron grip. With his right hand, Afzal Khan tried to run Shivaji through with his sword. However, the armour that Shivaji was putting on saved him from the blow. Then came the turn of Shivaji. With the help of the "tiger claws" (Baghnakh) fastened to his left hand, Shivaji forced Afzal Khan to relax his grip and after that he stabbed him with his dagger. After this, the attendants of Afzal Khan and Shivaji exchanged blows. Afzal Khan lost his life and the Maratha troops, which were in readiness, pounced upon the Muslim troops and massacred them mercilessly.

The question has been raised how far the murder of Afzal Khan by Shivaji was justified. According to Khafi Khan, Shivaji was guilty of treachery and deceit. Grant Duff has also followed him. However, modern researches have shown that Shivaji did everything in self-defence. This is what the records of the English factories show. Instead of allowing himself to be killed by Afzal Khan, he killed him instead. There has been a controversy as to who struck the first blow. It has been finally decided that Afzal Khan was the aggressor.

According to J. N. Sarkar, "To the Marathas the fight with Afzal has always appeared as at once a war of national liberation and a crusade against the desecrator of temples. To them Afzal

Khan typifies the bold bad man who combines treachery with frightfulness and defies God and man alike. The historians from the earliest times have seen no element of murder in the incident, but always described it as glorious example of the sagacity, courage and agility with which their national hero averted a treacherous plot against his own life, made the treachery recoil on the plotter's head and avenged the outraged shrines of their gods."

The failure of the expedition of Afzal Khan led to the conquest of the countries southward to Panhala and along the banks of the Krishna. Another army was sent by the Government of Bijapur against Shivaji, but that also met with the same fate. Shivaji was able to carry his arms to the very gates of Bijapur. His generals captured Bijapur and Dabhal. A third expedition did not fare any better. The fourth army of Bijapur was commanded by the Shah of Bijapur himself. In spite of that, nothing substantial was gained and the war dragged on for more than a year. Ultimately, the Government of Bijapur entered into negotiations for peace. Shivaji was recognised as the ruler of the territories in his possession and there the matter ended.

### Shivaji and the Mughals

Shivaji did not spare even the Mughals. He started attacking those provinces which were a part of the Mughal territory. Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor, was not prepared to take it lying. In 1660, he sent Shayista Khan as the Governor of the Deccan and instructed him to put a check on the activities of Shivaji. Shayista Khan was able to defeat the Marathas at a few places. He also captured a few forts belonging to Shivaji. However, the Maratha troops made the lives of the Mughal soldiers a hell. The latter did not know how to deal with such enemies. Shayista Khan decided to spend the rainy season at Poona. Unfortunately he took up his residence in that very house in which Shivaji had spent his childhood and consequently was acquainted with every nook and corner of the place. Shivaji hit upon a bold plan. He entered the city of Poona at night with 400 followers in the form of a marriage party and attacked the residence of Shayista Khan. Shayista Khan was fast asleep at that time. He was aroused by one of his slave girls. Before he could strike, his thumb was cut off by Shivaji. The son of Shayista Khan was surrounded and killed. After finishing their work, the Marathas ran away (April 1663). The attack was a complete success. That added to the prestige of Shivaji.<sup>1</sup> Next morning when Raja Jaswant Singh went to see Shayista Khan, the latter remarked thus : "I thought the Maharaja had died fighting for me in the last night's

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1. According to J.N. Sarkar, "The daring and cunning of Maratha hero were rewarded by an immense increase of his prestige. He was taken to be an incarnation of Satan; no place was believed to be proof against his entrance and no feat impossible for him. The whole country talked with astonishment and terror of the almost superhuman deed done by him; and there was bitter humiliation and sorrow in the Emperor's court and family circle at this disaster to his maternal uncle and the 'premier peer' (Amir-ul-Umara) of his empire."

attack." It was suspected that Raja Jaswant Singh had his hand in the attack. Aurangzeb was so much upset that he called Shayista Khan from the Deccan in December 1663 and appointed him the Governor of Bengal.

### **Attack on Surat (1664)**

Shivaji attacked Surat with 4,000 picked men who were fully armed. A lot of booty was carried away from the town. The English and Dutch factories were able to defend themselves and were saved.

### **Jai Singh and Shivaji**

Aurangzeb deputed Raja Jai Singh to deal with Shivaji. Prince Muazzam at that time was the Governor of the Deccan. Jai Singh relieved Jaswant Singh in March, 1665 and started preparations for an attack on the territories of Shivaji. Shivaji was surrounded on all sides. Even Raigarh, the seat of Shivaji's Government, was threatened. The flying columns of the Mughals destroyed the Maratha villages. Finding himself helpless, Shivaji decided to come to terms with Jai Singh. With that object in view, Shivaji visited the camp of Jai Singh and entered into the Treaty of Purandhar in June, 1665. According to this treaty, Shivaji surrendered 23 of his forts and retained only 12 for himself. His son Sambhaji was to be created a Panj Hazari Mansabdar and he was to be given a jagir. Shivaji was not to be forced to attend the Mughal court like other Mansabdars. However, he promised to render military help to Aurangzeb in his wars in the Deccan. Shivaji agreed to pay 40 lakhs of Huns to Aurangzeb in 13 annual instalments if his possession of certain lands yielding 4 lakhs of Huns a year in the Konkan and 5 lakhs of Huns in a year in the Balaq was confirmed. It was expected that Shivaji would occupy those lands with his own soldiers. Shivaji also agreed to help the Mughals in their attack of Bijapur.

The Treaty of Purandhar was regarded to be a great diplomatic victory for Jai Singh. Shivaji joined the Mughals in their war against Bijapur, although the war was not a success. Jai Singh persuaded Shivaji to visit the Mughal court. According to Sardesai, Shivaji agreed to go to Agra because he wanted to have personal knowledge of Aurangzeb, his court and the sources of his strength. According to J. N. Sarkar, Jai Singh persuaded Shivaji to visit the Mughal court by holding out very high hopes to him. He also took personal responsibility for his safety at the capital. It goes without saying that a visit to the Mughal capital was a dangerous one but in spite of that Jai Singh succeeded in his efforts to send Shivaji to Agra.

Shivaji and his son Sambhaji reached Agra in May, 1666. However, they were not shown the respect which they expected. This upset Shivaji and there was an exchange of words between him and Aurangzeb. "Thus, Shivaji's high hopes were dashed to pieces and he found himself a prisoner instead." However, Shivaji did not give up hope. He made up his mind to find out an excuse

to escape from Agra. He pretended to be ill and started sending baskets of sweets for distribution among the Brahmins and the poor. These baskets were watched for some time by the guards but later on the watch was relaxed. Shivaji took advantage of this and escaped along with his son in these baskets. He managed to reach Maharashtra by following a circuitous route. There was great rejoicing among the Marathas. It was a national deliverance, as providential, as it was romantic. Aurangzeb suspected Jai Singh and recalled him. The latter died on his way in July, 1667.

The Mughals were not in a position to deal with Shivaji. ...They were busy with the Afghan risings in the North-West "which taxed the imperial strength for more than a year." Prince Muazzam was weak and indolent and Raja Jaswant Singh was friendly towards Shivaji. The result was that there was not much to fear from the Mughals. In 1668-69, Shivaji occupied himself with the reorganisation of his internal administration. Jaswant Singh and Muazzam persuaded Aurangzeb to grant the title to Shivaji. His son Sambhaji was also made a Mansabdar of 5,000. Shivaji was also given a Jagir in Berar.

After a brief respite, war started once again in 1670 between Shivaji and the Mughals. Many of the disbanded soldiers from the Mughal army joined Shivaji. The result was that Shivaji was able to capture many forts and thereby add to his dominions. In December 1670, the officers of Shivaji got from the two local authorities of certain districts in Khandesh written promises to pay Chauth to Shivaji.

In 1670, Shivaji plundered Surat for the second time and was able to secure a booty of Rs. 66 lacs. In 1672, the Marathas got Chauth from Surat. Between 1670 and 1674, the Marathas got successes everywhere. The Mughal power in the Deccan was crippled.

In 1674 Shivaji got himself coronated at Raigarh according to the Vedic rites. He became the sovereign ruler of Maharashtra. A new era was also started. Unfortunately Shivaji did not live long. His reign lasted only for six years. In 1676, Shivaji planned and began to direct operations in the South. Before his death in 1680, he was able to capture Jinji, Vellore and many other important forts. The expedition to Jinji has been described as "the most important expedition of Shivaji's life."

At the time of his death, Shivaji's kingdom or Swaraj comprised the Western Ghats and the Konkan between Kalyan and Goa, with some districts to the East of the mountains. The provinces in the South comprised the Western Karnatak extending from Belgaum to the bank of the Tungbhadra, opposite to the Bellary district of the Madras Presidency. Vellore, Jinji and a few other districts were not settled at the time of his death.

#### **Shivaji's administrative system**

According to Rawlinson, "Like nearly all great warriors—Napoleon is a conspicuous example—Shivaji was also a great admini-

nistrator, for the qualities which go to make a capable general are those which are required by the successful organiser and statesman." In theory, Shivaji was an autocrat, like his contemporaries. He could do what he pleased. However, he was assisted by a Council of 8 ministers known as the Ashta Pradhan. It is absolutely misleading to say that Ashta Pradhan was like a modern cabinet. Its functions were purely advisory. The eight ministers were the following :

(1) The Peshwa or Prime Minister whose duty was to look after the general welfare and interests of the state.

(2) The Amatya or Finance Minister whose duty was to check and countersign all public accounts of the Kingdom in general and the particular districts.

(3) The Mantri or Chronicler whose duty was to keep a diary of the daily doings of the King and also record everything that happened at the court. He was also called Wakia-Nawis.

(4) Summant or Dabir or Foreign Secretary whose duty was to advise the King on matters relating to foreign states and all questions of war and peace. He was also to see foreign ambassadors and envoys and keep touch with the state of affairs in other states.

(5) Sachiv or Shuru Nawis or Home Secretary whose duty was to look after the correspondence of the King. He was to see that all royal letters and dispatches were drafted in the proper style. He had the authority to revise them. He also checked the accounts of the Parganas.

(6) Pandit Rao or Danadhyaksha or Sadar and Muhtasib or Ecclesiastical Head whose duty was to fix dates for religious ceremonies, punish hearsay and distribute among the Brahmins the charity of the King. He was the judge of canon law and censor of public morals.

(7) Nyayadhis or Chief Justice who was responsible for civil and military justice.

(8) Senapati or Sari Naubat or Commander-in-Chief who was in charge of the recruitment, organisation and discipline of the Army. He arranged disposition of the troops in the battle-field.

It is to be noted that with the exception of the Nyayadhis and Pandit Rao, all other ministers were required to command armies and lead expeditions. "All royal letters, charters and treaties had to bear the seal of the King and the Peshwa and the endorsement of the next four ministers, i.e., other than the Commander-in-Chief, the Ecclesiastical Head and the Chief Justice. There were 18 departments of the state and those were under the charge of the various ministers who worked under the supervision and guidance of the King.

## Local Government

Shivaji divided his kingdom into four provinces and a Viceroy was appointed for each. The provinces were divided into a number of Prants. The system of granting Jagirs was abolished and Shivaji started the system of paying the officers in cash. Even when the revenues of a particular place were assigned to any official, his only concern was with the money and he had no control over the people. It was laid down that no office was to be hereditary.

## Army

Shivaji was a military genius and no wonder he took pains to put the army on an efficient footing. It was the practice of the Marathas to work for half the year upon their field and to spend the dry season in the saddle on active service. Such a system was considered to be defective by Shivaji and he introduced the system of keeping a regular standing army. During the rainy season, it was provided with quarters and the soldiers were given regular salaries for the whole year. Regular grades were fixed up. In the case of cavalry, the unit was formed by 25 troopers. Over 25 troopers was placed one Havaldar. Over 5 Havaldars was placed one Jumladar and over 10 Jumladars were placed one Hazari. Other higher ranks were the Five Hazari and the Sari Noubat of cavalry or Supreme Commander. For every 25 troopers, there was a water-carrier and a farrier. The cavalry was divided into two classes: the Bargirs and the Shiledars. The Bargirs were supplied with horses and arms by the state and the Shiledars had to find their own equipment.

The infantry was divided into regiments, brigades and divisions. The smallest unit was formed by 9 soldiers who were under a Naik. Over 5 Naiks was placed a Havaldar and over two or three Havaldars was a Jumladar. Over 10 Jumladars was placed a Hazari and over seven Hazaris was placed a Sari Naubat.

Both Hindus and Muslims were recruited in the army without any distinction. Soldiers were paid in cash and had full confidence in their leaders. Those soldiers who showed bravery, were rewarded. Shivaji was able to attract a large number of persons from different parts of the country on account of his appreciation of worth.

Forts played a very important part in the military organisation. Garrisons of forts were carefully selected. Great care was taken to keep the troops disciplined. Every fort was placed under three officers of equal status, viz., the Havaldar, the Sabnis and the Sari Naubat.

Shivaji built a considerable fleet which was stationed at Kolaba. He checked the power of the Abyssinian pirates of Janjira. It also plundered the rich Mughal ships.

Shivaji was very anxious to maintain discipline in the army. Women were not allowed to go with the army. The baggage was restricted to the minimum. The following were some of the regulations of the army; "The army should return to cantonments in the

home territory during the rainy season. Grain, fodder and medicines were to be stored for the houses and thatched huts constructed for the troopers. Soon after Dashehra the army marched out of the cantonments and for eight months it subsisted on foreign territories. No women, female slaves or dancing girls should be permitted. Any one breaking the rule should be put to death. Women and children of the enemy should be protected. Brahmins were to be let alone and should not be accepted as sureties, when contributions were levied from conquered country. Precious articles seized by the troops during their sojourn abroad should be sent to the treasury. Those who kept back anything should be severely dealt with." According to Khafi Khan, Shivaji "laid down the rule that whenever a place was plundered the goods of poor people, pulsiyah (copper money) and vessels of brass and copper, should belong to the man who found them; that other articles, gold and silver, coined or uncoined gems, valuable stuffs and jewels, were not to belong to the finder, but were to be given up without the smallest deduction to the officers and to be paid over by them to Shivaji's Government." It is stated that on the occasion of the sack of Surat, the Marathas did not touch cloth, copper utensils and other insignificant articles.

### Fiscal System

Shivaji abolished the system of taxing of farmers. A direct arrangement was made by the Government with cultivators, According to Sarkar, "The Ryots were not subject to the authority of the Zamindars, Deshmukhs and Desais who had no right to exercise the powers of a political superior or harass the Ryots, The land was carefully surveyed with the help of a measuring rod or Kathi. The share of the state was fixed at 30% of the produce but later on it was increased to 40% when other taxes were abolished. The cultivator was allowed to pay in cash or in kind according to his sweet will. The amount of money to be paid was fixed and consequently there was not much chance of their oppression. The state encouraged agriculture. We are told that in times of famine, the Government advanced money and grain to the cultivators which were to be paid back in instalments later on. Fryer has condemned the revenue system of Shivaji and according to him there was oppression of the peasants. "The great fish prey on the little and even Bijapur rule was milder than that of Shivaji." It is admitted that Shivaji was very strict in the matter of realisation of land revenue so that much discretion may not be left in the hands of the officers for oppression or favouritism. It is admitted on all hands that Shivaji's system was humane and beneficent and according to Grant Duff, Shivaji's claim to "a high rank in the pages of history must be admitted."

Shivaji started the system of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi. According to Justice Ranade, the Chauth was not a military contribution without any moral or legal obligation. It was a payment in lieu of protection against the invasion of a third power. Ranade compared the system of Chauth with the system of subsidiary alliances of Wellesley and added that "the demand for Chauth was subsequently added with the consent of the powers whose protection was undertaken against foreign aggression on payment of fixed sums for

the troops maintained for such services. This was the original idea as worked out by Shivaji and it was the same idea which in Marquis of Wellesley's hands bore such fruit a hundred and twenty years later."

Sir J. N. Sarkar holds a different view. According to him, "The payment of the Chauth merely saved a place from the unwelcome presence of the Maratha soldiers and civil underlings, but did not impose on Shivaji any corresponding obligation to guard the district from foreign invasion or any internal disorder. The Marathas looked only to their own gain and not to the fate of their prey after they had left. The Chauth was only a means of buying off one robber, and not a subsidiary system for the maintenance of peace and order against all enemies. The lands subject to the Chauth cannot, therefore, be rightly called spheres of influence."

According to Sardesai, the great Maratha historian, the Chauth was a tribute realised from hostile or rival territories. Such a system prevailed in Western India even before the advent of Shivaji. Shivaji got Chauth from the countries invaded by him with the promise that he would protect them from other foreign invaders.

According to Dr. Sen, the author of **Administrative System of the Marathas**, Chauth was a contribution exacted by a military leader. Such a demand was justified by the circumstances of the times. In theory, the Chauth was one-fourth of the revenue of a district invaded by the Marathas. According to Sarkar, "As the paper assessment was always larger than the actual collection, the real incidence of the Chauth was considerably more than one-fourth of what the peasant paid to their legitimate sovereign."

The term "Desai" is a corrupted form of the Sanskrit word *m'Desaswami* or *Deshmukh*. *Sardeshmukh* was over many *Deshawks* or *Desais*. He was paid for his services and that payment was called *Sardeshmukhi*. Shivaji claimed to be the hereditary *Sardeshmukh* of his country and consequently demanded an additional levy of 10% as *Sardeshmukhi*. However, it cannot be denied that it was merely a legal fiction.

### Justice

The administration of justice was of a primitive nature. No regular courts were set up and no regular procedure was laid down. The Panchayats continued to decide disputes in the villages. The system of ordeals was common. Criminal cases were tried by the Patels. Appeals in both civil and criminal cases were heard by the Nyayadhis who were guided by the Smritis. *Hazir Majlis* was the final Court of appeal.

### Estimate of Shivaji

It goes without saying that Shivaji possessed a creative genius of a very high order. From the son of a petty Jagirdar in a Muslim state, he rose to the position of a Chhatrapati. He brought order out of chaos and welded the Marathas into a nation. The Marathas

regarded him as a "superman, a divine agency to free them from the yoke of Muslims." He had a very high standard of morality. Although he was illiterate, he was capable of understanding the most complicated problems of Government. Both in diplomacy and statecraft, he had no equal. He was a very religious-minded man but this does not mean that he was a bigot. He respected the Muslim saints also and gave lands and annuities to Muslim shrines. It is true that he fought against the Muslims, but he stopped the war as soon as they accepted his overlordship. Khafi Khan describes Shivaji as "a father of fraud" and "a sharp son of the devil." But even he admits that Shivaji had "made it a rule that whenever his followers went plundering, they should do no harm to the mosques, the Book of God, or the women of any one. Whenever a copy of the sacred Koran came into his hands, he treated it with respect and gave it to some of his Mussalman followers. When the women of any Hindu or Mohammadan were taken prisoners by his men, he watched over them until their relations came with their ransom to buy their liberty." Again, "Shivaji had always striven to maintain the honour of people in his territories. He persevered in a course of rebellion, plundering caravans and troubling mankind; but he entirely abstained from other disgraceful acts and was careful to maintain the honour of women and children of Mohammadans, when they fell into his hands. His injunctions upon this point were very strict and any one who disobeyed them received punishment."

Shivaji "had the born leader's personal magnetism and threw a spell over all who knew him, drawing the best elements of the country to his side and winning the most devoted service from his officers, while his dazzling victories and ever-ready smile made him the idol of his soldiery. His gift of judging character was one of the main causes of his successes, as his selection of generals and governors, diplomatists and secretaries were never at fault, and his administration, both civil and military, was unrivalled for efficiency."

The view of Prof. M.B. Deopujari is that the place of Shivaji in Indian military tradition should be determined by the extent to which he contributed to the development of the art of war. An analysis of the military transactions of the Shivaji period reveals the working of the master mind seeking balance between military force and strategem, direct fighting and indirect methods of offensive warfare. The means adopted to defeat powerful enemy commanders like Afzal Khan and Shayista Khan manifest mental and moral qualities, judgment, resolution, courage, talent for conceiving and executing surprises and a high moral purpose that constitute military genius. Skill in devising stratagems or in executing tactical manoeuvres proves the existence of a particular or special bent of mind in general. The charismatic character of Shivaji's hold on the mass mind, the spiritual fervour, enthusiasm and devotion for the cause he communicated to the rank and file, the common trooper no less than the highest officer and the civilian, are achievements associated with genius. The errors of Shivaji benefited his adversaries very little. He turned them to good account by so managing things that loss in human life was minimised and the morale of the army remained high.

His two escapes—one from Panhala besieged by Sidi Jauhar and the other from Agra—can be cited as examples. The period of regular defensive warfare by land and sea was not one of guerilla enterprises. Maratha fighters had become seasoned troops and Maratha officers were ready to carry on their own. These considerations are enough to show that Shivaji's genius for war was not limited to genius for guerilla war.

Rawlinson says ; "His was a dark and violent age and at least Shivaji's hands were not stained like those of Aurangzeb with the blood of his kindred. He was never deliberately or wantonly cruel. To respect women, mosques and non-combatants, to stop promiscuous slaughter after the battle, to release and dismiss with honour captured officers and men—these are surely no light virtues."

According to Jadunath Sarkar, "No blind fanatic, no mere brigand can found a state. There can be no denying the fact that he was, as the ancient Greeks would have called him, a king among men—one endowed with the divine instinct or genius." Again, "Unlike Ranjit Singh and Mahadji Scindhia he built up an administrative system and raised a national army without any foreign help. His institutions lasted long and were looked up to with admiration and emulation even a century later in the palmy days of Peshwas' rule." Shivaji was not "an entrepreneur of rapine of a Hindu edition of Ala-ud-Din Khilji or Timur". According to Sarkar again, "Before his rise, the Maratha race was scattered like atoms through many Deccani Kingdoms. He welded them into a mighty nation and he achieved this in the teeth of the opposition of four mighty powers like the Mughal Empire, Bijapur, Portuguese India and the Abyssinians of Janjira. No other Hindu has shown such capacity in modern times. The materialistic Maratha authors of the Bhakhars have given us a list of Shivaji's legacies—so many elephants, horses, soldiers, slaves, jewels, gold and silver and even spices and raisins ! But they have not mentioned Shivaji's greatest gift to posterity, viz., the new life of the Maratha race." To quote Sarkar again, Shivaji was "not only the maker of the Maratha nation, but also the greatest constructive genius of medieval India", and "the memory of a true 'hero as king' like Shivaji remains an imperishable historical legacy for the entire human race—to animate the heart, to the highest endeavours". According to Sarkar again, "To the Hindu world in that age of renewed persecution, Shivaji appeared as the star of a new hope, the protector of the ritualistic paint-mark (Tilak) on the forehead of the Hindus and the Saviour of the Brahmins. His court, as later his son's, became the rallying point of the opposition to Aurangzeb. The two rivals were both supermen, but contrasts in character."

Elphinstone says, "Though the son of a powerful chief, he had begun life as a daring and artful captain of banditti, had ripened into a skilful general and an able statesman, and left a character which has never since been equalled or approached by any of his countrymen. The distracted state of the neighbouring countries presented openings by which an inferior leader might have profited ; but it acquired a genius like his to avail himself as he did of the mistakes of Aurangzeb,

by kindling a zeal for religion, and, through that, a national spirit among the Marathas. It was by these feelings that his government was upheld after it had passed into feeble hands and was kept together, in spite of numerous internal disorders, until it had established its supremacy over the greater part of India. Though a predatory war, such as he conducted, must necessarily inflict extensive misery, his enemies bear witness to his anxiety to mitigate the evils of it by humane regulations, which were strictly enforced. His devotion latterly degenerated into extravagances of superstition and austerity but "seems never to have obscured his talents or soured his temper." (*Aurangzeb*, pp. 167-68).

According to Grant Duff, "The territories and the treasures, however, which Shivaji acquired, were not so formidable to the Mughals as the example he had set, the system and habits he had introduced and the spirit he had infused into a large proportion of the Maratha people."

The greatness of Shivaji has been expressed in the following couplets :

- (1) The pillar of a people's hope.  
The centre of a world's desire.
- (2) The corrupt Muslims have become now kings.  
Everywhere misdeeds have cropped up,  
Then He incarnated himself.  
To remove the sins of this dark age.

### Shivaji and Hindu Empire

According to Sardesai, the object of Shivaji was not merely to free the Hindus of Maharashtra but also to set freedom for all the Hindus living in various parts of India. Sardesai has given many reasons for his view. According to him, Shivaji's main object was to secure religious freedom for the Hindus and not territory. In 1645, he wrote to Dadaji Naras Prabhu about his scheme of "Hindavi-Swarajya". The scheme aimed at religious autonomy for the Hindus all over India. After the death of Shivaji, his ideal and ambition were interpreted in that light by the Marathas. Moreover, "Shivaji's levy of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi was conceived in the spirit of an all-India instrument of expansion." Shivaji decided to go to Agra with the object of studying the conditions in Northern India and find out the possibility of overthrowing the Mughal Empire. His desire to regenerate the Hindus is supported by the fact that he developed land and sea forces and set aside the prejudice against sea-voyages. Shivaji also encouraged the readmission into the Hindu society of Hindu converts to Islam. He did not fight with the Rajput chiefs and tried to maintain good relations with them.

However, this view is not accepted by other historians. It is pointed out that it was impossible to secure religious autonomy for the Hindus so long as the Mughal Empire was not destroyed. There is nothing to show that he entertained any ambition to be the leader of the Hindus of India. He had no definite scheme of an alliance

with other Hindus of India against the Mughals. It is well-known that Shivaji did not avail of the services of Chhatrasal Bundela who came to help him. It is evident that Shivaji was not trying to set an all-India Hindu Empire.

### **Weakness in Shivaji's System**

In spite of the efforts of Shivaji, his Empire did not last long. It was a military organisation like that of Ranjit Singh and Ala-ud-Din Khilji and was destroyed within a decade of his death. There were many causes responsible for it. Like Babur, the reign of Shivaji was very short and throughout all this period he had to fight against the enemies and consequently he had no time to consolidate his position. The Maratha society was such as could be reformed by the patient and sustained efforts of selfless workers for years. There were constant disputes among the Marathas with regard to the distribution of Watan or hereditary land. When Shivaji became supreme, he had to decide those cases and while doing so, he gave decisions against certain parties. These parties became his enemies and joined hands with his enemies. This fact gave a lot of trouble to Shivaji all his life. The large number of castes in Maharashtra in the 17th century also created dissensions among the Marathas and stood in the way of their solidarity. The Brahmins hated the non-Brahmins and were themselves sub-divided into Desh Brahmins, Konkan Brahmins and Chitpavan Brahmins. The Brahmins quarrelled among themselves. Moreover, the success of Shivaji brought about the supremacy of Hindu orthodoxy. The upper classes put emphasis on ceremonial purity, and this created a division between the rich and the poor. According to Jadunath Sarkar, "Shivaji's political success sapped the main foundation of that success. In proportion as Shivaji's ideal of a Hindu Swaraj was based on orthodoxy, it contained within itself the seed of its own death." According to Rabindra Nath Tagore, "A temporary enthusiasm sweeps over the country and we imagine that it has been united; but the rents and holes in our body-social do their work secretly; we cannot retain any noble idea long. Shivaji aimed at preserving the rents; he wished to save from Mughal attack a Hindu society to which ceremonial distinctions and isolation of castes are the very breath of life. He wanted to make this heterogeneous society triumphant over all India! He wove ropes of sand; he attempted the impossible. It is beyond the power of any man, it is opposed to the divine law of the universe, to establish the Swaraj of such a caste-ridden, isolated, internally torn sect, over a vast continent like India." Moreover, no well considered attempt was made to educate the people of Maharashtra and to improve their intellect and character. The ignorance of the masses was a great obstacle in the way of the success of the Maratha nation. To quote J.N. Sarkar, "There was no attempt at well-thought-out and communal improvement, spread of education or unification of the people, either under Shivaji or under the Peshwas. The cohesion of the people in the Maratha state was not organic but artificial, accidental and, therefore, precarious. It was solely dependent on the ruler's extraordinary personality and disappeared

when the country ceased to produce supermen among its rulers." Moreover, a government of personal discretion is uncertain and has a fatal effect on administration. "However well-planned the machinery and rules might be, the actual conduct of the administration was marred by inefficiency, sudden changes of personal and official corruption, because nobody felt secure of his post or of the due appreciation of his merit."

### **Sambhaji (1680-89)**

After the death of Shivaji, Sambhaji, his eldest son, ascended the throne. He was a man of loose character and spent all his time in merry-making. He completely ignored the work of re-organisation of the Marathas. When Aurangzeb was busy in his campaigns against Bijapur and Golconda, he and his followers did not take advantage of the opportunity. Nothing was done to harass the Mughal armies. When Bijapur and Golconda were conquered, Aurangzeb decided to deal with the Marathas. Many of their forts were captured and Sambhaji moved to Sangameshwar. He wasted a lot of his precious time at that place. The result was that Muqarrab Khan, the Mughal general, made a surprise attack and captured him along with his friend Kavi Kulesh and their wives and daughters. The prisoners were brought in heavy chains to the Imperial camp. In the words of J.N. Sarkar, they were presented to Aurangzeb in the following manner: "Four miles outside the encampment, Sambhaji and Kavi Kulesh were dressed as buffoons with long fool's caps and bells placed on their heads, mounted on camels, and brought to Bahadurgarh with drums beating and trumpets pealing..... Hundreds of thousands of spectators lined the roads to gaze Sambhaji as a new kind of wild beast or demon. Thus degraded, the captives were slowly paraded through the entire camp and finally brought to the Emperor who was sitting in full Durbār for the occasion. At the sight of the prisoners Aurangzeb descended from his throne and kneeling down on the carpet bowed his head to the ground in double thankfulness to the Giver of this crowning victory. After he had looked at them, the captives were removed to prisons."

Khafi Khan tells us that when Kavi Kulesh saw this devotion of Aurangzeb, he addressed verses to Sambhaji to this effect: "Oh Rajah, at the sight of these the king Alamgir, for all his pomp and dignity, cannot keep his seat upon the throne, but has perforce descended from it to do the honour." Another story is that Aurangzeb sent an officer to Sambhaji enquiring as to where the latter had hidden his treasure and which Mughal officers had intrigued with him. It is stated that Sambhaji abused Aurangzeb and the Prophet and demanded the hand of Aurangzeb's daughter as the price of his friendship. When all this was reported to Aurangzeb, he decided to take severe action against him and his followers. Consequently, Sambhaji and his followers were tortured and put to death in March 1689, "their limbs being hacked off one by one and their flesh thrown to the dogs." According to the custom of the Mughals, the heads of the culprits were stuffed with bran and were exposed in public in all the chief cities of the Deccan.

Probably, Sambhaji deserved his fate. He had to pay heavily for his vices.

However, by his death, Sambhaji achieved what he had failed to do in life. The effect of his imprisonment and death was that the Marathas were united and they made up their minds to carry on a relentless struggle against the Mughals. The Mughals carried on their struggle with the Marathas with vigour and the result was that they were able to capture a large number of forts in a short period. Itiqad Khan conquered Raigarh and was also able to capture the family of Sambhaji including his son, Shahu. Raja Ram, a son of Shivaji by another wife, escaped in the guise of a Yogi and stationed himself in the fort of Jinji in the Karnatak.

### **Raja Ram (1689-1700)**

Raja Ram lacked the qualities of his father. He possessed neither the initiative nor the dash of Shivaji. He was hardly ten when his father died and he was kept a prisoner by his brother Sambhaji. The result was that he failed to get the education which was necessary for his status. However, he was fortunate in having brilliant advisers and helpers. Ram Chandra Pant and Parhlad Niraji were his advisers and they possessed exceptional ability. Shantaji and Dhanaji were two great warriors who carried out the plans and policy of Raja Ram. No wonder, the Marathas were able to have the upper hand over the Mughals in the time of Raja Ram. Raja Ram himself was addicted to opium and dissipation. He possessed the virtue of selecting the right type of ministers and putting his trust in them. That was the main cause of his success.

Shantaji Ghorpare and Dhanaji Jadav, with their plundering hosts, ravaged the country. They cut off the Mughal convoys and spread terror and confusion everywhere. In spite of the fact that an able general like Zulfikar Khan was sent to besiege Jinji in 1691, no better results could be achieved. This fort was one of the strongest forts in Southern India and no wonder Raja Ram was able to defy the Mughals. Zulfikar Khan, in spite of his handicaps, tried to take over the forts and provinces which were newly acquired. The siege was unusually prolonged and Prince Khan Baksh was recalled on account of his suspected behaviour. Likewise Zulfikar Khan was recalled in 1694 on account of his failure. Many other generals were tried between 1694 and 1697.

After 1690, the Marathas began to win victories. Two Mughal generals were defeated and captured. By 1695, two other Mughal generals were defeated. These generals were Qasim Khan and Himmat Khan. The struggle between the Marathas and the Mughals was "no longer a simple military problem, but had become a trial of endurance and resources between the Mughal Empire and the indigenous people."

From 1695 to 1699, the Marathas under Shantaji and Dhanaji harassed the Mughals to such an extent that they were completely demoralised. According to Sarkar, "The Mughal administration had really dissolved and only the presence of the emperor with all his troops in country held it together; but it was now a delusive phantom. Shanta and Dhana were the heroes of this period; the initiative lay entirely with them and they upset every plan and calculation formed by the imperialists." However, Jinji was captured in January 1698, after a siege of 8 years. Before its capture, Raja Ram escaped to Satara where he organised a new state army and brought all the Maratha generals under his banner. He also levied Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from Khandesh, Berar and Baglana.

By October 1699, Aurangzeb was fed up with the mutual quarrels of the Mughal generals and he decided to conduct the campaign against the Marathas personally. In December 1699, Satara was besieged. Although vigorous efforts were made to capture the fort, no good result followed. Satara was captured after the death of Raja Ram in 1700.

### **Tara Bai (1700-7)**

After the death of Raja Ram, Karna, his son, came to the throne. However, he died after a few weeks on account of small pox. Tara Bai, Raja Ram's widow, put another son named Shivaji II on the throne and became herself the regent. Tara Bai was a vigorous lady. She took keen interest in the affairs of the State. She possessed a lot of knowledge of civil and military affairs. According to Khafi Khan, "She took vigorous measures for ravaging the imperial territory, and sent armies to plunder the six Subhas of the Deccan as far as Sironj, Mandisor, and the Subha of Malwa. She won the hearts of her officers, and for all the struggles and schemes, the campaigns and sieges of Aurangzeb up to the end of his reign, the power of the Marathas increased day by day. By hard fighting, by the expenditure of the vast treasures accumulated by Shah Jahan, and by the sacrifice of many thousands of men, he had penetrated into their wretched country, had subdued their lofty forts, and had driven them from house and home; still their daring increased, and they penetrated into the old territories of the imperial throne, plundering and destroying wherever they went.....Whenever the commander of the army hears of a large caravan, he takes six or seven thousand men and goes to plunder it. If the collector cannot levy the Chauth, the general destroys the towns. The headmen of the villages, abetted by the Marathas, make their own terms with the imperial revenue officers. They attack and destroy the country as far as the border of Ahmedabad and the districts of Malwa, and spread their devastations through the provinces of the Deccan to the environs of Ujjain. They fall upon and plunder caravans within ten or twelve kos of the imperial camp, and have even had the hardihood to attack the royal treasure."

In addition to the capture of Satara, the Mughals got the forts of the Parli (1700), Panhala (1701), Kondana (1701), Khelna (1702), Rajgarh and Torna (1704). Some were got by military valour and others by treachery and bribery. In 1705 was captured the fort of Wagingera which belonged to the Berads. The inmates of the fort carried their women and children with them and set fire to all that was left behind. The result was that the Mughals got nothing in spite of their victory. The capture of Wagingera was the last military victory of Aurangzeb.

In spite of his best efforts, Aurangzeb failed to crush the spirit of the Marathas. On the other hand, the latter had become the masters of the situation and their resources increased on account of their raids and robberies. According to Manucci (1704), "the Maratha leaders and their troops move in these days with much confidence, because they have cowed the Mughal commanders and inspired them with fear. At the present time, they possess artillery, muskets, bows and arrows with elephants and camels for all their baggage and tents. They carry these to secure some repose from time to time. In short they were equipped and moved about just like the armies of the Mughals.....only a few years ago they did not march in this fashion."

In 1703, the Marathas attacked Berar and in 1706, they invaded Gujarat and sacked Baroda. In the same year the Marathas threatened the camp of Aurangzeb at Ahmednagar. Such was the Mughal state of affairs.

According to Manucci, the entire land had become so much depopulated that neither fire nor light could be found in the course of a three or four days' journey. "In the Deccan there was no rain from 1702 to 1704, but instead plague prevailed. In these two years have expired over two millions of souls ; fathers compelled by hunger, offering to sell their children for a quarter to half a rupee, and yet forced to go without food, finding no one to buy them."

Famine, pestilence and flood fought on the side of the Marathas. According to J. N. Sarkar, "The soldiers and camp-followers suffered unspeakable hardships in marching over flooded rivers and rain-soaked roads, porters disappeared, transport beasts died of hunger and overwork, scarcity of grain was chronic in the camp."

Tara Bai managed the affairs of the state in the name of her son Shivaji II. She was assisted in her work by Paras Ram Trimbak, Dhanaji Jadav and Shankerji Narayan. She moved from place to place with a view to guiding the Maratha operations against the Mughals. She was the very soul of the Maratha resistance. No amount of suffering could weaken her resolve. Her indomitable personality was responsible for the success of the Marathas.

According to J. N. Sarkar, "The difficulties of Aurangzeb were only multiplied by the disappearance of a common head and

a Central Government among the Marathas, as every Maratha captain with his own retainers fought and raided in a different quarter and on his own account. It now became a people's war, and Aurangzeb could not end it, because there was no Maratha Government or State army for him to attack and destroy. It was not a simple military problem but had become a trial of endurance and resources between the Mughal Empire and indigenous people of the Deccan.....They were no longer a tribe of banditti or local rebels, but the one dominating factor of Deccan politics, the only enemy left to the Empire, and yet an enemy all pervasive, from Bombay to Madras across the Indian peninsula, elusive as the wind, without any headman or stronghold whose capture would naturally result in the extinction of that power."

### **Sahu (1707-49)**

After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, the Mughals tried to divide the Marathas. In 1707, Zulfiqar Khan, the Governor of the Deccan, set Sahu free and the latter claimed the Government of the country from Tara Bai. Sahu had been captured in 1689 and kept in Mughal custody along with his mother. He was seven years of age at that time. He spent more than 18 years in captivity and got the training which could be available under the circumstances. Efforts were made to convert him but without much success.

When Sahu was released by the Mughals, there started a struggle between the two groups of the Marathas. Tara Bai declared that Sahu was an imposter and he had no right to the Kingdom which had been lost by his father Sambhaji. The present state was created by her husband Raja Ram and Shivaji II was the lawful ruler. She sent an army under Dhanaji to check the advance of Sahu and a battle was fought at Khed in November, 1707. Tara Bai was defeated and she retired to Kolhapur with her son, Shivaji II. When Shivaji II died his step brother Sambhaji was put on the Gaddi of Kolhapur. Sahu was recognised as the ruler of the Marathas on the Gaddi of Satara.

The relations between Sahu and Sambhaji were not cordial. The latter was determined to get back half of Maratha territory for himself. Sambhaji went to the extent of hiring assassins to murder Sahu. However, in 1731, the Treaty of Warna was signed between Sahu and Sambhaji. According to it, Sahu gave to Sambhaji the Warna Mahal and all the districts known as Dotarfa along with the forts and military outposts to the south of confluence of the Warna and the Krishna. The fort of Kopal was also given to Sambhaji in exchange for Ratnagiri. All the forts and military outposts from the confluence of the Warna and the Krishna to that of the Krishna and the Tungabhadra to the south were given to him. From the Tungabhadra to Rameshwaram, half the territory was given to Sambhaji. In the Konkan, all the districts from Salsi to Panch Mahal were given to Sambhaji. Both the parties agreed to destroy the enemies of each other and agreed to work together for his improvement of the Kingdom.

The Treaty of 1731 resolved the differences between Satara and Kolhapur and after that the relations between Sahu and Sambhaji remained cordial. Sambhaji paid many visits to Satara and he was very nicely treated by Sahu. Sambhaji died in 1760, 11 years after the death of Sahu.

According to Sardesai, Sahu was never a clever politician nor a capable commander. However, his commonsense and sympathetic heart helped him to detect those qualities in others and utilize them for the service of the state. He made the right selection of the right persons and gave them a free hand without grudge or hindrance. He advanced the interests of the ryots, brought barren tracts under cultivation, encouraged the plantation of trees, relieved the sufferings of the poor and removed many burdens of taxes. He considered himself one with the people. He freely mixed with them and shared their joys and sorrows. On the occasions of festivals, celebrations, dinners, etc., he took an active part with outsiders. Both the rich and the poor invited him to their marriages and other celebrations. He is rightly called by many writers as **Punya Shloke** (of pious memory). He succeeded in achieving brilliant results through a mild persuasive policy dictated by rigid justice and good-will to all. He had a winning personality. Few notable figures in history approach his personality in the rule of the heart.

Sahu had a soft corner in his heart for everyone who approached him. There was no tinge of caste prejudice in his nature or policy. Although he did not personally lead distant expeditions, he kept a close watch over the actions of his subordinates to whom he had allotted separate spheres of influence. He called them to account for any wrong or misdeed committed by them, reprimanded them, punished them, rewarded them, composed their quarrels and adjusted their disputes by calling them to his presence at Satara for personal explanation, or settlement.

According to Dr. Sinha, "Thus expired one of the kindest of men, most generous of kings and most god-fearing of the religious-minded persons. His weaknesses are glaring. He had neither the strength of will nor the calibre of the statesmen to control critical situations. He was good, affectionate, ease-loving and peaceful. But he possessed in plenty the rare gift of judging men and matters extremely accurately. He hardly ever erred in selecting his own men and in reposing confidence in them. His loving and frank disposition endeared him to all, and more than made up for his defeat. He was loyally served and devotedly regarded by all. He loved his relatives, officers and people equally dearly, and his good intentions won the hearts of all. He was worshipped in his country and passed away mourned by all."

"But his personality was a real force in the Maratha state. He was the symbol of its unity and though each member of the confederacy ruled more or less in virtual independence, yet all of them had to obey the commands of the king. The obedience was not due to the

actual authority that the king exercised as such, but partly to the individual who happened to be king at the time, that is to say, to the personality of Sahu, and partly to the tradition of the Hindus that the king, however, worthless, should be regarded as an incarnation of God on earth. Sahu's authority was personal rather than official. By this time the real powers of the king had changed hands, and he had lost the real initiative in matters of high policy, real control in matters of actual administration and real power, where the safety and integrity of the state were concerned. The king was now the sinking sun, and the Peshwa was the rising moon orb in his light. So long, therefore, as the king Sahu lived, the Peshwa sincerely considered himself as his servant. That was due to Sahu's personality. But after him ensued a period of turmoil and trouble, the reign of a weak and worthless youth, who spent his life in prison, and the Peshwa stepped into the vacant office of kingship and became the head of affairs both in fact and in name. Thus Sahu in spite of weakness was the king of the Marathas, but his successor Ramraja sank into insignificance and allowed the Peshwas to be supreme in the state." (**Rise of Peshwas**, pp. 251-252).

### **Ramraja (1749-77)**

Sahu I was succeeded by Ramraja. He was declared by Tarabai to be grandson of Rajaram who had lived in exile as an ordinary fellow. There was a struggle for power between Tarabai on the one side and Balaji Bajirao on the other. The Peshwa was not prepared to give up the power which he was enjoying. Tarabai captured Ramraja on 24th November, 1750 and made him a prisoner. This imprisonment continued up to 1763 when Tarabai herself died. To begin with, the Peshwa wanted to free Ramraja from the hands of Tarabai but later on a reconciliation was made between Tarabai and the Peshwa and on that occasion Tarabai declared that Ramraja was an imposter and not the real grandson of Rajaram. The result of this was that no respect was left in the eyes of the people for Ramraja. However, he was freed after 1763 and he spent the rest of his days in peace.

### **Sahu II (1777-1808)**

Ramraja was succeeded by his adopted son Sahu II. Sahu II was a youngman of strong build and took to his high position with high hopes of improving the lot of his family and serving the Maratha State so far as it lay in his power. However, he found that his position was very miserable. His allowances were cut down by Nana Phadnavis and many kinds of restrictions were imposed upon him and the members of his family. Although he was known as Chhatrapati, he was looked upon as a costly appendage with no assigned duty to perform. The only function left to him was to bestow the official robes of the Peshwaship whenever a new Peshwa succeeded.

### **Pratap Singh (1808-1839)**

When Sahu II died in 1808, he was succeeded by his son Pratap Singh. The relations between the Chhatrapati and Peshwa Bajirao

were not cordial. The result was that on many occasions Pratap Sinh approached the British Government to help him against the Peshwa. When the Peshwa fell in 1818, Pratap Sinh was installed once again in his former position by the British. A small territory nearly equalling the present district of Satara was given to Pratap Sinh for his rule. On 25th September, 1819, a formal treaty was entered into between the British Government and Partap Sinh. By that treaty, Pratap Sinh undertook not to hold any correspondence with the outside Powers. He was not to increase his forces but was to remain for ever loyal to the British Government.

To begin with, the relations between the British Government and Paratap Sinh were cordial and he was even helped by the British Government. However, later on the relations became strained and he was deposed on 4th September, 1839, without giving him an opportunity to explain his conduct. Pratap Sinh died in 1847. According to a contemporary Maratha writer, "He (Pratap Sinh) possessed a very keen intellect and an uncommon address. An expert rider and brave soldier, a pure generous heart, trained in the traditional lore, he quickly detected the merits and foibles of those he came in contact with. He adjudicated complicated disputes with exemplary impartiality and conducted the administration with firmness and regularity. He was ever disposed to forgive rather than to avenge. He was careful in his religious observances and took delight in relieving the misery of the poor and the oppressed."

### Shahji (1839-48)

Paratap Sinh was succeeded by his brother, Shahji Appasaheb. He was notoriously incompetent. However, he died childless on 5th April, 1848. No adoption was allowed and the state of Satara was annexed by the British Government. This annexation was one of the causes of the Mutiny of 1857.

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## CHAPTER X

# Rise and Growth of Sikh Power

### Guru Nanak (1469-1538)

Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikhism. He was born in 1469 at a village called Talwandi, now called Nankana Sahib, in West Punjab. The name of his father was Mehta Kalu and that of his mother was Tripta. The name of his sister was Nanki. When he was seven he was sent to the village school but it is stated that the child was always contemplating and consequently neither the Hindu nor the Muslim teachers were able to teach him much. His father asked him to look after his cattle and land, but he failed. He tried to put him in some trade but the son was more after **Sacha Sauda** or true bargaining than after making money. Instead of doing any business, he distributed the money among the needy persons. With a view to taking his son away from his unworldly tendencies, he married him with Sulakhani at the age of 15 and he had two sons. Even his marriage had no effect on him and he was sent to Sultanpur where his brother-in-law was working. He got the job of a Store-keeper and he performed his duties very honestly. In 1499, he got enlightenment in the River Baen near Sultanpur. After some time, he gave up his job and became an ascetic.

For about 30 years, Nanak wandered about learning and teaching on the way. His first tour lasted for about 12 years. He visited Eminabad, Kurukshetra, Hardwar, Banaras and Kamrup or Assam. During his second tour, he visited the Deccan and Ceylon. His third tour was to Kashmir and the Kailash Mountain. He is said to have visited Baghdad, Mecca and Medina. His last tour was confined to the Punjab. He visited Pakpattan, Depalpur, Kasur, Patti, Vairawal, Pasrur and Dera Baba Nanak. His last days were spent at Kartarpur near Dera Baba Nanak. He died in 1538. It is stated that once upon a time Guru Nanak and Mardana, his disciple, were arrested and thrown into prison by Babur. However, they were released when Babur came to know that the person arrested was a saintly man.

### Teachings of Nanak

The main teachings of Guru Nanak were the faith in one True Lord, the worship of the Name and the necessity of a Guru in the worship of the Name. According to Nanak, "There is but one

God whose Name is True, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn and self-existent. Through the favour of Guru, repeat His Name. The True One was in the beginning, the True One was in the primal age. The true One is, was, O Nanak, the True, One also shall be." Nanak put emphasis on the unity of God. No one could equal Him. God was unrivalled. God was above Vishnu, above Brahma, superior to Shiva and the creator of Rama and Krishna."

God is immanent and transcendent. Nobody knows the limits of God. God alone knows how great He is. Nanak compares God to the beloved and says that God is in the heart of every individual. To quote him,

"The light which is in everything is Thine. O Lord of light,  
From its brilliancy everything is brilliant."

Again,

"This world is the True One's chamber ;  
The True One's dwelling is therein.  
Some by His Order He absorbeth in Himself :  
Others by His Order He destroyeth."

Guru Nanak had belief in a personal and merciful God. Sincere devotion of God and a righteous life could help an individual to reach God. God helps his votaries in times of trouble. He lives in their hearts and if they surrender to him, he takes charge of them. God is omnipresent, There is no place for the worship of idols. The only way to please God is through surrender of self to Him. To quote Nanak, "Efface thyself, so shalt thou obtain the bridegroom." Passion (Kam), anger (Krodh), greed (Lobh), attachment (Moh) and pride (Hankar) are the five enemies of mankind.

Nanak put emphasis on the worship of the True Name. Repetition of the True Name (Sat Nam) was to be done with the greatest amount of devotion. To quote Nanak, "The Name is the God, the God of all gods. Some propitiate Durga, some Shiv, some Ganesh and some other gods but the Guru's Sikhs worship the True Name and thus remove all obstacles to salvation." Nanak put too much emphasis on Sat Nam and his view was that those who did not repeat the Sat Nam could not be saved at all.

Nanak put emphasis on the importance of Guru for the realisation of God. To quote him, "Without the Guru, no one can obtain God, however long the matter be debated." Again, "Under the Guru's instruction, God's word is heard ; under the Guru's instruction, its knowledge acquired ; under the Guru's instruction, man learns that God is everywhere contained." With the help of Guru, man enjoys divine pleasure, he does not know any sorrow. Guru is the raft or the ladder of the Sikhs. Guru is found through divine grace.

Nanak put emphasis on **Karma** or good actions. He ridiculed the wearing of the sacred thread. He denounced all the external marks of holiness which were considered to be essential in those days.

According to Khushwant Singh, "There are positive injunctions against austere asceticism involving renunciation of society, celibacy and penance. All the Gurus led normal family lives and discharged secular functions as householders as well as the spiritual mentors of their belief. The concept of righteous living is meaningless except in the context of the community. There is constant reference to being in the world but not worldly. The ideal is to achieve saintliness as a member of society and to have a spiritual existence with the necessary material requisites." According to Jupji,

"Words do not the saint or sinner make,  
Action alone is written in the book of fate,  
What we sow that alone we take ;  
O Nanak, be saved or forever transmigrate."

Again,

"A man may load carts with books. He may lead men  
with books to take with him.

Books may be put in boats ; pits may be filled with them.  
A man may read books for months ; he may read them for  
years.

He may read them for life ; he may read them while he  
bath breath,

Nanak : only one word, God's name, would be of  
account.

All else would be senseless discussion of the proud."

Nanak condemned the caste system. According to him,  
"Castes are folly, names are folly." Again, "There is no Hindu and  
no Mussalman."

The following are some other sayings of Guru Nanak:

"Practise humility, renounce pride, restrain the mind, re-  
member God.

Be honest, watch, restrain the five evil passions, be  
content."

"Make continence thy furnace, resignation thy goldsmith.

Understanding thine anvil, divine knowledge thy tools,

The fear of God thy bellows, austerities thy fire.

Divine love thy crucible, and melt God's name therein.

In such a true mint the Word shall be coined.

This is the practice of those on whom God looked with an  
eye of favour.

Nanak, the kind One by a glance maketh them happy."

"The sinners who have committed transgressions are bound  
and led away.

Their luggage of sins is so heavy that they cannot lift it.

The steep road ahead is dark, while the executioner wal-  
keth behind them.

In front is a sea of fire, how shall they cross it?

Ravens stand upon men's skulls, and peck at them fast as  
a shower of sparks.

Nanak, where shall men escape when the punishment is by  
God's order ?"

Guru Nanak owed a lot of debt to Islam. This is clear from his words and thoughts. He was steeped in Sufi lore. It appears that his knowledge of the Vedic and Puranic literature was superficial. He was concerned more with the practical aspect of life than with deep learning.

### **Reformer or Revolutionary**

There are two views regarding the work of Guru Nanak. According to one school of thought, Nanak was a reformer of Hinduism. This view is held by writers like Dr. G.C. Narang and Payne. According to the other view, Nanak was a revolutionary and the advocates of this view are Teja Singh, Kahn Singh and Macauliffe.

According to the first view, Guru Nanak belongs to the Bhakti school of thought in India. His teachings are practically the same as those of the other Bhakti reformers such as Kabir. Nanak did not attack the fundamentals of Hinduism but merely those bad practices which had crept into the Hindu society in the course of centuries. He did not show any disrespect to Hindu Avatars and divinities. He merely challenged the high position given to the Hindu gods. He put more emphasis on God than his incarnations. He attacked the Vedas and the Puranas but did not question the wisdom and philosophy found in them. He wanted the people to incorporate into their lives the teachings of the scriptures rather than merely make a show of them. To quote Banerjee, "One must realise the difference between an attack on scripturalism and one on the scriptures themselves." Most of the teachings of Nanak were identical with those of the Bhakti reformers. The teachings of Hindu reformers like Namdev and Kabir were incorporated into the *Adi Granth* itself. According to Payne, the aim of Guru Nanak "was not to sweep away Hinduism but to restore it to its ancient purity. Like Luther he came to protest against the idolatry, the blind superstitions and the empty rituals, which had so long estranged religion from morality and the hearts of men from their Creator."

According to the other view, Guru Nanak was a revolutionary who "aimed upsetting the cherished institutions of the society in which he was born, bringing about a social cataclysm and building a new order on the ruins of the old." He condemned the caste system which was the very basis of Hindu society. He also suggested positive steps to ignore the caste system altogether. He started the institution of **Langar** or common kitchen in which all persons, irrespective of the castes, were to sit together and eat together. Guru Nanak condemned asceticism which was the basic feature of the Hindu religion. He did not attach any importance to penance and fasting. He repudiated the Hindu mythology and questioned the utility of idol worship and the custom of going on pilgrimages.

It is not possible to accept completely either of the two views. It must be conceded that Guru Nanak did not deliberately set up a new religion. However, his preachings and the work of his successors ultimately led to the rise of a new religion in the form of Sikhism.

## Nanak's Place in History

It goes without saying that Guru Nanak occupies a place of pride not only in the history of the Punjab or India but also of the whole world. Guru Nanak was one of the Prophets of the world. He gave to the world the gospel of love, goodwill and reconciliation. He profoundly influenced the history of the Punjab. According to Dr. Gokal Chand Narang, "Nanak left the Hindus of the Punjab immensely better than he had found them. Their belief had been ennobled, their worship purified, the rigidity of caste considerably relaxed, their minds greatly emancipated; and they have now become more fit to enter on the career of natural progress to which Nanak's successors were destined to lead them." Again, "It leavened the whole Hindu thought in the Punjab and improved the moral and spiritual tone of the whole people." According to John Clark Archer, "He was a historic person. He is also a theological construction. He is what India and the world in general think he is, he is also what Sikhs think of him. He is a historical theological figure to them, a real person and also a creature of religious fancy." Guru Nanak has been compared to Luther. So far as spiritualism was concerned, Guru Nanak was far ahead of Luther, but it cannot be denied that the influence of Luther was much greater than that of Guru Nanak. While the teachings of Luther spread all over Europe, those of Nanak influenced mainly the Punjab. According to Sewa Ram Singh, "The legend of Guru Nanak's life will always bring into activity the tender feelings of human soul, and all men will proclaim that among sons of men, none was born greater than Nanak."

Cunningham sums up Nanak's achievements in these words : "Thus Nanak extricated his followers from the accumulated errors of ages and enjoined upon them devotion of thought and excellence of conduct as the first of duties. He left them erect and free, unbiased in mind and unfettered by rules, to become an increasing body of truthful worshippers. His reform was in its immediate effect religious and moral only: believers were regarded as 'Sikhs' or disciples not as subjects; and it is neither probable, nor is it necessary to suppose, that he possessed any clear and sagacious views of social amelioration of political advancement. He left the progress of his people to the operation of time: for his congregation was too limited, and the state of society too artificial to render it either requisite or possible for him to become a municipal law-giver, to subvert the legislation of Manu, or to change the immemorial usages of tribes or races. His care was rather to prevent his followers contracting into a sect, and his comprehensive principles narrowing into monastic distinctions."

According to Dr. Tara Chand, "The religious movement started by Guru Nanak continued to gather momentum under his successors. Its stern ethical tone and its definite puritanism were elements which distinguished it from similar movements in India. Its spirit of non-compromise carried within its possibilities of martyrdoms and the seeds of an organised church. The unsettled political conditions of the later period of the Mughal Empire gave these possibilities their opportunity, and the seed bore fruit. The

later Gurus were inevitably drawn into the whirl of politics and they transformed the Church into a militant society. But although the Sikhs changed their organisation their religion retained almost unaltered the impress of Guru Nanak's teaching."<sup>1</sup>

### **Guru Angad (1538-52)**

Guru Angad was nominated as his successor by Guru Nanak. It is stated that if Nanak had not appointed his successor, the Nanakpanthis or Sikhs would have been absorbed into Hinduism in due course of time. Angad popularised the Gurumukhi alphabet. A biography of Nanak was compiled. His sayings were also collected at one place. The Udasis were turned out from the Sikh fold. Strict discipline was maintained among the disciples and those who were rebellious were severely dealt with. It is stated that Humayun came to Angad to get his blessings.

### **Guru Amar Das (1552-74)**

Angad was succeeded by Amar Das. Before his conversion to Sikhism, Amar Das was a devotee of Vishnu. His succession was disputed by the sons of Nanak and Angad. However, the opposition died out in course of time on account of the patient sufferings of Guru Amar Das. The new Guru constructed a Baoli at Goindwal which became an important place of pilgrimage for the Sikhs. He reformed the institution of **Langar** and gave more importance to it. He divided his spiritual empire into 22 parts called Manjis. Each Manji was put under the charge of a Sikh. Separate ceremonies to be performed at the time of birth and death of the Sikhs were prescribed. These were different from those of the Hindus. He prohibited the custom of **Sati**. He asked his followers not to take wine. He condemned **pardah** for women. According to Indu Bhushan Banerjee, Sikhism "forged its own weapon, hedged itself behind newer forms and customs, in short, developed individuality of its own. It was under his auspices that the rudiments of a separate organization were given to the Sikhs, and new forms and practices were introduced to supersede the old and bind the neophytes more closely together." Again, "It was under Amar Das that the difference between a Hindu and a Sikh became more pronounced and the Sikhs began gradually to drift away from the orthodox Hindu society and form a class, a sort of new brotherhood by themselves."

### **Guru Ram Das (1575-81)**

Guru Amar Das was succeeded by his son-in-law called Ram Das. He had very cordial relations with Akbar who granted 500 Bighas of land in the neighbourhood of modern Amritsar at a very nominal price. The Emperor also remitted the revenues of the Punjab for one year. Guru Ram Das built a new town called Chak Guru or Ramdaspora which later on came to be known as Amritsar. He started the excavation of two tanks, Amritsar and

1. *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 177.

Santokhsar. He sent his agents everywhere to collect money for the above purposes. Sikhism gained popularity during this period.

### Guru Arjan (1581-1606)

Guru Arjan was the head of Sikhism for a quarter of a century and he accomplished a lot during his regime. He completed the construction of Amritsar and founded other cities like Taran Taran and Kartarpur. He constructed a **Baoli** at Lahore.

The most important work of Arjan was the compilation of the **Adi-Granth**, the Bible of the Sikhs. He collected together all the available material and dictated the whole thing in the form of verses. This work was completed in 1604. It includes the hymns and teachings of the five Sikh Gurus, 16 Hindu Bhakats and saints like Kabir, Farid, Nam Dev, Rai Das, etc., the verses of Bhats, etc. According to Khushwant Singh, "The Granth is a unique historical document. It is, perhaps, the only kind of writing of a scriptural nature which has preserved without embellishment or misconstruction the original writings of the religious literatures. It has saved the literary works of other poets of the time from the vagaries of human memory. The Granth Sahib is the central object of Sikh worship and ritual." Again, "The Granth Sahib is not like the idol in a Hindu temple or the cross in a Catholic Church. It is the source and not the object of prayer or worship. Sikhs revere it because it contains the teachings of their Gurus. It is more a book of divine wisdom than the word of God."

Guru Arjan introduced the **Masand** system. The Sikhs were asked to pay one-tenth of their income to the Guru in future. The Guru appointed his representatives to collect the money. All this money was sent to Amritsar on the Baisakhi day. The Guru also encouraged the Sikhs to engage themselves in horse-trade.

Relation between Guru Arjan and Akbar were cordial but the things changed after the accession of Jahangir. Ultimately, the Guru was tortured to death in 1605. Many reasons have been given for this tragedy. It is stated that Jahangir was annoyed because Guru Arjan gave his blessings to his rebel son, Prince Khusrau. Jahangir also did not like the growing popularity of Sikhism. He took strong objection to the conversion of Hindus and Muslims to Sikhism. To quote Jahangir, "They called him Guru and from all sides, stupid people crowded to worship and manifest complete faith in him. For three or four generations of spiritual-successors, they kept their shop warm. **Many times, it occurred to me to put a stop to this vain affair or to bring into the assembly of the people of Islam.**" It is also stated that Chandu, the Diwan of Lahore, wanted to marry his daughter to the son of Guru Arjan but the latter refused. Chandu could not put up with this insult and poisoned the ears of Jahangir who ordered Guru Arjan to pay a fine of Rs. 2 lakhs and to erase from the Granth all those hymns which were objectionable to the Muslims and Hindus. The Guru refused to do so and hence was tortured to death.

According to Teja Singh, the manner in which Guru Arjan was put to death "convinced the Sikhs that they must arm themselves and fight, if they wanted to live." The martyrdom of Arjan gave strength to the Panth. It was the turning point in the history of Sikhism. They were not to be merely devotees but were also to become warriors.

### **Guru Hargobind (1606-44)**

Guru Arjan was succeeded by his son, Hargobind. From the very beginning, he was the deadly enemy of the Mughals. He asked his followers to keep arms and fight against the Mughal tyrannv. He himself took up the title of Sachcha Padshah. He adopted the emblems of royalty, viz., an umbrella, sword and a hawk. He put on the dress of a soldier. He put on two swords one of which indicated his spiritual authority and the other his temporal authority. Instead of accepting money from his followers, he asked them to offer horses and weapons to him. He fortified Lohgarh. He built the Akal Takht, the throne of Almighty. He enrolled a large number of armed volunteers and even Pathans were welcomed to join.

Guru Hargobind's policy of armed resistance has been criticised by certain writers. It is contended that the lure of politics and glamour of arms led the Guru away from the true path of religion and spiritualism. However, according to I. Banerjee, "Both externally and internally, the situation was changing and the policy of the Guru had perforce to be adjusted to the new environment. The organisational development of Sikhism had mostly taken place during the tolerant days of Akbar who had never interfered with it; he had, on the contrary, even helped the Gurus in various ways. But the execution of Guru Arjan and Hargobind's imprisonment definitely showed that sterner days were ahead and that the policy of mere peaceful organisation no longer sufficed. Guru Arjan had foreseen and Guru Hargobind also clearly saw that it would no longer be possible to protect the Sikh community and its organization without the aid of arms; and the way in which he proceeded to secure this end speaks a good deal for sagacity and his shrewd political sense."

Jahangir could not tolerate the militant policy of Hargobind and consequently the latter was arrested and imprisoned in the fort of Gwalior. The Guru was released after a few years on the intervention of Mian Mir and Wazir Khan. The relations between the Guru and Jahangir became friendly afterwards, and continued to be so. During the reign of Shahjahan, the relations became bitter once again. Shahjahan was intolerant. He destroyed the Sikh **Baoli** at Lahore. The quarrels which originally started over hawks or horses between the Mughal officials and the Sikhs subsequently led to risings on a large scale and were responsible for deaths of thousands of persons on both sides. Battles were fought at Amritsar, Kartarpur and other places. Ultimately Guru Hargobind retired to the hills where he spent the rest of his life.

Guru Hargobind was a teacher and protector of his disciples. He realised the gravity of the situation and prepared his followers for the coming struggle. He created a war-like spirit among his followers.

### **Guru Har Rai (1644-61)**

Guru Hargobind was succeeded by his grandson, Har Rai. The new Guru followed a policy of peaceful propaganda. His relations with the Mughal Emperor were alright. However, Prince Dara asked for military aid and the blessings of the Guru and the Guru obliged him by doing the same. The result was that when Dara was defeated, Aurangzeb became his bitter enemy. He summoned the Guru to his court but the Guru excused himself and sent his eldest son. Aurangzeb asked him to explain certain passages in the Sikh scriptures which were against Islam. The Guru's son satisfied the Emperor by changing certain words in the Granth Sahib. This was resented by the Guru who disinherited his son and appointed Har Krishan, a minor, as his successor.

### **Guru Har Krishan (1661-64)**

Har Krishan was only 5 when he became Guru. He died three years after. He was called by the Emperor to Delhi where he got an attack of small pox and died.

### **Guru Teg Bahadur (1664-75)**

Guru Teg Bahadur was the 9th Guru. He inherited the hostility of Aurangzeb and it was mainly on account of the intervention of Mirza Raja Ram Singh that Aurangzeb did not take any serious action against him. Different accounts are given regarding the reasons which were ultimately responsible for the action taken against him by Aurangzeb. One view is that the Guru became the target because he took up the cause of the Kashmiri Brahmins who approached him to save them from religious persecution. It is stated that the Mughal Governor of Kashmir had converted a large number of Hindus to Islam and murdered those who had resisted. Consequently, the Kashmiri Brahmins approached Guru Tegh Bahadur for protection. After a lot of thinking, the Guru asked the Kashmiri Brahmins to go to Delhi and tell Aurangzeb that Guru Tegh Bahadur was the protector of the Hindus and if he became a Muslim, the other Hindus would also follow him. The Kashmiri Brahmins did as they were asked to do. Aurangzeb sent his messengers to bring the Guru to Delhi. The Guru took some time to reach Delhi as he met his followers on the way. This created suspicion in the mind of the Mughals. A search was made for him and he was arrested at Agra and brought to Delhi where he was put in prison. Aurangzeb asked him either to embrace Islam or show some miracle. On his refusing to do so, the Guru was put to death. Another version is that the orders for the arrest of Guru Tegh Bahadur were issued because he had laid waste the whole of the Punjab. According to Indu Bhushan Banerjee, the Guru suffered not because of political reasons but because of his religious activities. The Guru

was of a peaceful disposition and he led the life of a saint. It is too much to believe that he was responsible for laying waste the whole of the Punjab and action had to be taken against him on account of that.

According to Dr. G. C. Narang, "His execution was universally regarded by the Hindus as a sacrifice for their faith. The whole of the Punjab began to burn with indignation and revenge." The execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur revolutionized the life of his son, Guru Gobind Singh.

### **Guru Gobind Singh (1675-1708)**

Guru Gobind Singh was the 10th and the last Guru. He was given thorough training in arts of peace and war by his father. When he became Guru, he found that his followers were divided and had not the capacity and courage to fight against the Mughals. He began to give them training in the art of warfare and even recruited Pathans in his army. He came into conflict with the hill Rajas and fought the famous battle of Bhangani. Gobind Singh did not do well in the beginning but he ultimately came out victorious. He made Anandpur his headquarters. Many attempts were made to subdue him but they failed as the adviser of the Mughals, Prince Muazzam, who was in charge of the operations, admired the Guru.

In 1699, on the Baisakhi day, Guru Gobind Singh created the **Khalsa**. He is stated to have sought the blessings of Durga for strength, but Sikhs do not believe in the story. He summoned a big assembly of the Sikhs at Anandpur and selected 5 persons who came to be known as Panj Piaras. They took the water of immortality. After baptizing them, the Guru asked them to initiate him. In this way, the **Guru was merged into the Khalsa and the Khalsa was merged into Guru**. The followers of Nanak were turned into soldier-saints. The Sikhs were given a distinct dress and they were required to keep on their person five things beginning with K, viz., **Kesh, Kirpan, Kachha, Kangha and Kara**. The Sikhs followed a policy of fighting Muslim fanaticism with Sikh fanaticism.

The hill chiefs took strong objection to the activities of Guru Gobind Singh and they all joined hands against him. The result was that in 1701 was fought the first Battle of Anandpur in which the hill chiefs were defeated and the Guru was successful. However, they appealed to Aurangzeb for help. The latter sent instructions to the Mughal officials in the Punjab to take action against the Guru. Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, sent his forces against the Guru. In 1703-4 was fought the second Battle of Anandpur. The Sikhs put up a stiff resistance but ultimately, they had to surrender Anandpur. Two of the sons of the Guru were captured and bricked up at Sirhind. Another battle was fought at Chamkaur where two more sons of the Guru were killed. Another battle was fought at Khidrana or Muktsar in 1706. After this battle, the Guru settled at Talwandi Sabo or Dam Dama.

Aurangzeb died in 1707 and was succeeded by his son, Bahadur Shah. Guru Gobind Singh had cordial relations with the new Emperor and agreed to accompany him to the Deccan. The Guru was stabbed by a Pathan in October, 1708. The last words of the Guru were: "I have entrusted you to immortal God. Ever remain under His protection and trust none besides. Wherever there are 5 Sikhs assembled, know that I am in the midst of them. Henceforth, the Guru shall be in the Khalsa and the Khalsa in the Guru. I have infused my mental and bodily spirit into the Granth Sahib and the Khalsa."

It is interesting to reproduce the last letter addressed by Guru Gobind Singh to Aurangzeb. This is known as Zafar Nama and reads thus: "I have not a particle of confidence in thee. I was forced to engage in the combat and fought to the utmost of my ability. When an affair passeth beyond the region of diplomacy, it is lawful to have recourse to the sword. If thou come to the village of Kangar, we shall have an interview. Thou shalt not run the slightest danger on the way, for the whole tribe of Bairars are under me. I am a slave and servant of the King of kings and ready to obey His order with my life. If thou hast any belief in God, delay not in this matter. It is thy duty to know God. He never ordered thee to annoy others. Thou art seated on an Emperor's throne: yet how strange are thy justice, thine attributes and thy regard for religion. Alas, a hundred times alas! for thy sovereignty! Strange, strange, is the decree! Smite not any one mercilessly with thy sword, or a sword from on high shall smite thyself. O man, be not reckless, fear God. He is the Emperor of earth and heaven. He is the creator of all animals from the feeble to the strong elephant. He is the Protector of the miserable, and destroyer of the reckless. What though my four sons were killed? I remain behind like a coiled snake. What bravery is it to quench a few sparks of life? Thou art merely exciting a raging fire. I will not enter thy presence, nor travel on the same road with thee, but if God so will it, I will proceed against thee. When thou lookest to thine army and wealth, I look to God's praises. Thou art proud of thine Empire, while I am proud of the Kingdom of the Immortal God. But not headless; this caravanserai is only for a few days. People leave it at all times. Even though thou art strong, annoy not the weak. Lay not the axe to thy Kingdom."

### Estimate

Guru Gobind Singh was a builder **par excellence**. "He brought a new belief into being and released a new dynamic force into arena of Indian History." He was the saviour of Hinduism. He came to the help of the Hindus when Aurangzeb was determined to convert *Dur-ul-Harb* (Land of Infidels) into *Dar-ul-Islam* (Land of the Faithful). He infused a new spirit among his followers and but for that spirit, most of the Hindus in Northern India might have embraced Islam. It is true that he protected Hinduism from Islam but this does not mean that he hated the Muslims. He was merely opposed

to the tyranny of the Mughal Emperors and not to Islam as such. He had his friends among the Muslims who actually saved his life when he was being hunted by the Mughals.

Guru Gobind Singh was not a military or political leader. He was essentially a man of God. He was made to infuse a militant spirit into his followers on account of the force of circumstances. The Guru was a scholar and a poet. He composed a large number of verses in Punjabi, Hindi and Persian. He was a patron of learning. He was a true democrat. He did not appoint any person who was to succeed him as a Guru of the Sikhs. He asked the Sikhs to have general meetings and make their decision by Gurmata or the deliberations and resolutions of the council.

According to Cunningham, "The last apostle of the Sikhs did not live to see his own ends accomplished, but he effectually roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people, and filled them with a lofty although fitful longing for social freedom and national ascendancy, the proper adjuncts of that purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak. Gobind saw what was yet vital, and he resumed it with Promethean fire. A living spirit possesses the whole Sikh people and the impress of Gobind has not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds, but has operated materially and given amplitude to their physical fames."

Again, "Gobind was equally bold, systematic and sanguine, but it is not necessary to suppose him either an unscrupulous impostor or a self-deluded enthusiast. He thought that the minds of men might be wrought upon the great purposes, he deplored the corruption of the world, he resented the tyranny which endangered his own life, and he believed the time had come for another teacher to arouse the latent energies of the human will. His memory was filled with the deeds of primæval seers and heroes; his imagination dwelt on successive dispensations for the instruction of the world, and his mind was not perhaps untinged with a superstitious belief in his own earthly destiny."

### **Banda Bahadur (1670-1716)**

Banda Bahadur was a Dogra Rajput. He was born in 1670. His original name was Lachhman Dass and he was very fond of hunting. Later on, he became a Bairagi and went away to the Deccan. It was in the Deccan that Guru Gobind Singh met him in 1708 and made him his own Banda or slave. He asked him to go back to the North and wreak vengeance on the enemies of the Khalsa. The Guru also sent instructions to the Sikhs of the Punjab to rally under his banner.

When Banda Bahadur entered the Punjab, the Sikhs from all quarters flocked under his banner. A large number of persons also joined him in the hope of getting booty. Kaithal, Samana, Shahabad, Ambala and Kapuri were looted. At Shadhura, Banda won a decisive victory. In 1710, he conquered Sirhind. The Battle of Sirhind was a bloody one. Banda was helped by thousands of Sikhs from Malwa and Majha as they wanted to punish the Governor of Sirhind who was regarded as the murderer of the sons of Guru Gobind Singh.

Wazir Khan himself was cut to pieces. Thousands of Muslims were butchered. The city was plundered. According to Latif, the Sikhs "butchered, bayoneted, strangled, hanged, shot down, hacked to pieces and burnt alive every Mohammedan in the place." Even "the mosques were polluted and burnt down and the Mullas, Maulvis and Hafizes were subjected to the greatest indignities and tortures." The dead body of Wazir Khan "was hanged on a tree and left to the tender mercy of the crows and vultures."

After the conquest of Sirhind, Banda Bahadur appointed Baj Singh as the Governor of Sirhind. Coins were struck in the name of the Guru in 1710. He abolished Zamindari system. The Sikhs revolted at Saharanpur, Behat and Jalalabad and the Mughals could not subdue them. The same was the case with the Sikhs of the Doab who could not be crushed by the Faujdar of Jullundur. The Sikhs captured Amritsar, Kasur, Batala, Kalanaur and Pathankot.

The above activities of the Sikhs forced Bahadur Shah to take action against them. All the Muslim Faujdars and Nazims were ordered to join hands to take a concerted action against them. More than 60,000 soldiers were sent under Amin Khan against Banda who was ultimately besieged in Lohgarh. There was bitter fighting and ultimately the fort had to be surrendered in December 1710. Banda escaped and retired to the hills. Farrukh Siyar sent Abdul Samad to crush Banda. Elaborate preparations were made in 1716 and ultimately was fought the famous Battle of Gurdas Nangal. The Sikhs put up a stiff resistance. Their rations were exhausted. They ultimately surrendered when they were in great distress. Banda was arrested and he along with other Sikhs was sent to Delhi where they were all paraded in the bazars. For the Muslims of Delhi, it was a great **Tamasha** but the Hindus and Sikhs felt it as a great humiliation. The other Sikhs and Banda were executed in June 1716. To begin with, the son of Banda was cut to pieces. After that, the flesh of Banda was torn with red-hot pincers. Thus ended the career of a great man.

### Estimate

To the Hindus and Sikhs, Banda Bahadur appeared as a great champion of their faith. He took up the cudgels against the tyranny of the Muslims. He took revenge for the murder of the sons of Guru Gobind Singh at Sirhind. The Muslim writers describe him as "one of the most sanguinary of monsters" or "ruthless blood-sucker." It is pointed out that Banda was neither a free-booter nor a tyrant like Attila and Chingiz Khan. To begin with, he led the life of a saint, but it was the force of circumstances that made him fight against the tyranny of the Mughals in the Punjab. According to Dr. G. C. Narang, "Guru Gobind Singh had diverted the attention of the followers from the plough to the sword. He had sown the seed; Banda reaped the harvest. The Guru had enumerated principles; Banda carried them into practice. Gobind Singh had destroyed the awe inspired by Mughal despotism; Banda completely broke the charm of its invincibility."

Banda Bahadur was a great organiser. According to Dr. Ganda Singh, "It was through him that the path of conquest and freedom was discovered by the people of the Punjab. He was the first man to deal a severe blow at the intolerant rule of the Mughals in the Punjab and to break the first sod in the conquest of that province by the Sikhs." The exploits of Banda Bahadur created a will in the ordinary masses of the Punjab to resist tyranny and to live and die for a national cause. Banda failed on account of his desertion by the Sikhs and the superior forces of the enemy.

According to Cunningham, "The memory of Banda is not held in much esteem by the Sikhs ; he appears to have been of a gloomy disposition, and he was obeyed as an energetic and daring leader, without being able to engage the personal sympathies of his followers. He did not perhaps comprehend the general nature of Nanak's and Gobind's reforms ; the spirit of sectarianism possessed him, and he endeavoured to introduce changes into the modes and practices enjoined by these teachers, which should be more in accordance with his own ascetic and Hindu notions. These unwise innovations and restrictions were resisted by the more zealous Sikhs, and they may have caused the memory of an able and enterprising leader to be generally neglected."

### **The Sikhs after the death of Banda Bahadur**

There was a division among the Sikhs after the death of Banda Bahadur in 1716. They were divided into two parts known as the Bandais and the Tat Khalsa. The former were the followers of Banda and the latter were the orthodox Sikhs. Through the efforts of Bhai Mani Singh, the differences between the two were composed in 1721.

Zakriaya Khan, Governor of the Punjab, from 1726 to 1745, followed a policy of persecution of the Sikhs. Tara Singh Van and his 21 followers were killed by the Mughal troops. The Mughal Governor appealed to Muslim fanaticism and the Haidari flag was hoisted. However, the Sikhs were able to defeat the Mughal forces at a place near Bhilawal. After this, the Mughal Governor tried to placate the Sikhs, but the latter organized themselves into the **Dal Khalsa**. There were two main divisions of the Dal Khalsa known as the Budha Dal and the Taruna Dal. The Budha Dal consisted of the army of the elders and the Taruna Dal consisted of the army of the young. The Taruna Dal was divided into 5 Jathas, each under a separate Sardar. Each Jatha had 1,300 to 2,000 men. Both the Dals worked under the common leadership of Nawab Kapur Singh. The members of the Taruna Dal were a source of nuisance to the Mughal forces. They overran the whole of the Bari Doab and some of them crossed the Sutlej and helped Ala Singh to set up a small state in Malwa.

In 1739, the Sikhs fell upon the rear of the army of Nadar Shah when he was retreating from Delhi along with his booty. They were able to snatch away a lot from the Afghans. Nadar Shah is stated to have remarked thus to the Mughal Governor : "Take care, the day is not distant when these rebels will take possession of the country." The result was that Zakriaya Khan decided to destroy the

Sikhs root and branch. Prizes were offered to those who helped him in his work. He who cut off the hair of a Sikh was given a blanket and a bedding. He who supplied information about the whereabouts of Sikhs was given Rs. 10. He who caught or killed a Sikh got Rs. 50. The Sikhs were hunted like wild beasts and they retired to the hills and the jungles. In 1742, Haqiqat Rai was put to death. Mehtab Singh, Buta Singh, and Bhai Taru Singh were executed. The Sikhs hit back. They attacked Sialkot and murdered all those Qazis and Mullahs who had a hand in the execution of Haqiqat Rai. They plundered Gondlanwala and its Faujdar was killed. They were given a crushing defeat near Basoli hills and about 7,000 of them were killed and 3,000 were taken prisoners. This is known as the first Ghalughara and it happened in 1746.

There was a civil war in the Panjab in 1746-47 and ultimately Shah Nawaz became the Governor of the Punjab. He was succeeded soon after by Mir Mannu as Governor of the Punjab. He also followed a policy of persecuting the Sikhs. The popular Punjabi saying about the persecution of the Sikhs by Mir Mannu is in these words :

“Mannu is our sickle and we are a crop for him to mow ;  
The more he cuts us, the more we grow.”

In spite of the persecutions of Mir Mannu, Sikhs remained unsubdued. The greater the persecution, the greater became their fanaticism. “The common danger and their strong religious feelings kept them under discipline and made every Sikh obey his leader in order to work for the cause of the Panth.” Since all of them were suffering, they were brought together against the Muslim tyrant. There were also prospects of getting money if the Muslims were turned out from the Punjab. Diwan Kaura Mal, who was trusted by Mir Mannu, was also a Sikh by faith. He exerted his influence to save the Sikhs.

After the death of Mir Mannu in 1753, his widow, Mughlani Begum, captured all power in the Punjab. She was a woman of loose character and that resulted in chaos in the Punjab. She was imprisoned and Adina Beg was appointed the Governor of the Punjab. Adina Beg made an alliance with the Sikhs and invited the Marathas. However, he died in 1758.

Ahmad Shah Abdali attacked India many times. In 1761, he defeated the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat. However, when he was going back, he was harassed by the Sikhs who also gave a lot of trouble to the Afghan Faujdar. The Sikhs won a victory at Gujranwala and occupied Lahore. Abdali came back in 1762 and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Sikhs. He ordered Ghalughara in Sikh history. The Hari Mandir (Amritsar) was destroyed. However, the Sikhs recovered their prestige by defeating Abdali in the Battle of Amritsar and the latter was obliged to run away. As the Sikhs continued to harass the Afghans, Abdali attacked the Punjab in 1764. Instead of facing him, the Sikhs ran away to the hills and jungles and consequently no harm could be done to them. Abdali invaded the Punjab again in 1766-67 but the Sikhs were not crushed.

There were many reasons why the Sikhs could not be crushed. Between 1748 and 1766, there was going on a struggle for power in the Punjab between the Mughals, the Afghans, the Marathas and the Sikhs. After the Battle of Panipat in 1761, the Marathas and the Mughals were eliminated. The struggle remained only between the Sikhs and Afghans. Ultimately, the Sikhs "emerged triumphant from their deadly struggle of the past 30 years and the long drawn agony of their subjection came to an end and the dream of their independence was realised." The tenacity of purpose of the Sikhs helped them to fight successfully against their rivals. Moreover, Ahmed Shah Abdali did not come to India to establish an empire in this country. He was merely interested in plunder and the result was that after his withdrawal, the Punjab was left in a chaotic condition<sup>1</sup> and the Sikhs took full advantage of the same. The Sikhs also took advantage of the vacuum created in the Punjab politics after the withdrawal of the Afghans. The dual policy of Adina Beg also helped the Sikhs. Adina Beg sometimes played the Afghans against the Sikhs and sometimes the Sikhs against the Afghans. The result was that the Sikhs were saved. It is pointed out that Ahmed Shah Abdali became over-confident after the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761 and underestimated the power and strength of the Sikhs. The result was that no adequate action was taken against the Sikhs. The guerilla tactics of the Sikhs also helped them. They were wise enough to avoid the blunder committed by the Marathas in 1761. There is every reason to believe that they would have been completely crushed if they had fought pitched battles against Ahmed Shah Abdali.

Reference may be made to some of the effects of the invasions of Abdali on the history of the Punjab. It is pointed out that his invasions paved the way for the rise of the Sikhs in the Punjab. The frequent invasions of the 'Afghans added to the confusion and anarchy in the Punjab and thus the Sikhs were able to set up their

1. The condition of the Punjab was described in these words by Waris Shah, author of *Hir Ranjha* :—

"Fools and sinners give counsel to the world,  
The words of the wise are set at naught.  
No man tells the truth or cares for justice.  
Telling what is untrue has become the practice in the world,  
With violence men commit flagrant iniquity.  
In the hands of tyrants there is a sharp sword.  
There is no Governor, Ruler, or Emperor.  
The country and all the people in it have been made desolate.  
Great confusion has fallen on the country,  
There is a sword in every man's hand.  
The purdah of shame and modesty has been lifted.  
And all the world goes naked in the open bazaar.  
Thieves have become leaders of men.  
Harlots have become mistresses of the household.  
The company of devils has multiplied exceedingly,  
The state of the noble is pitiable.  
Men of menial birth flourish and the peasants are in pro- great  
perity.  
The Jats have become masters of our country,  
Everywhere there is a new Government."

Misls. Life became insecure in the Punjab and there was a popular Punjabi saying to this effect : "Khada pita lahe da, rahnda Ahmed Shah da" (the only property that we hold is what we eat and drink, the rest belongs to Ahmed Shah). Another effect of Abdali's invasions was that the Punjabis became war-like. They learnt to take up arms to defend their hearths and homes.

### The Sikh Misls

The term Misl is an Arabic word which means equal or alike. According to Payne, "As membership in such a Jath or group conferred political, religious and social equality on all its members, they began to be designated as Misls." The Misls came into existence at a time when there was complete anarchy in Punjab and the Sikhs grouped themselves under certain leaders and each one of them came to be known as a Misl. Ordinarily, reference is made to 12 Misls, viz., Singhapuria or Faizalpuria, Ahluwalia, Ramgarhia Bhangi, Kanheyia, Sukarchakya, Pulkian, Dallewalia, Karorsinghia or Panjarhia, Nishanwalia, Nakkai and Shahid. However, according to Sir Lepel Griffin, it is not proper to say that there were 12 Misls because some of the confederacies were insignificant, *e. g.*, Nishanwalias, Nakkais, the Karorsinghia or Panjarhias and the Shahids. Ibbetson also does not put them in the category of Misls and calls them merely Dehras or camps. According to him, there were only 8 Misls and 4 Dehras. The Dehras had small tracts of land in the Malwa region of the Punjab. It is to be observed that all the Misls did not come into existence at the same time and also did not flourish at the same time. Sometimes, one Misl gave birth to another Misl. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia served under Nawab Kapur Singh of the Singhapuria Misl but later on set up his own Misl known as the Ahluwalia Misl. Likewise, the Bhangi Sardars and the Sukarchakya Chiefs who worked under Jassa Singh, set up their separate Misls later on.

According to Cunningham, the Misls were "theocratic confederate feudalism." The Misls were loosely knit together by the institution of Gurmatta which met in times of danger. "The obvious feudal or military notion of chain of dependence was acknowledged as the law and the federated Chiefs partitioned their joint conquests among themselves and divided their respective shares in the same manner among their own leaders of bands, while these again sub-divided their portions among their own dependents, agreeably to the general custom of sub-infeudation." However, Banerjee does not accept this view. According to him, the Misls "really formed a confederacy which was democratic in composition and religious in its cohesive principle." The Misls were associations of warriors united by ties of religion. According to Ibbetson, the organization of the Misls was "a curious mixture of theocracy, democracy and absolutism." The Sikh Sardars and the soldiers all fought for the Guru and when they assembled at Amritsar before the Guru Granth, they did what that religious gathering decided. It was democratic because every soldier or member of the Misl enjoyed social and political equality. But as

there was no regular machinery to check the Sardar, it was virtually an absolutism.

### Gurmatta

The central organization of the Misl was the Gurmatta. The literal meaning of this term is advice of the spiritual Guru. It is stated that after the death of the tenth Guru, the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar on such occasions as Diwali, Dussehra or Baisakhi and in the presence on the Adi Granth, they discussed their common plans of action at Akal Takhat. Their decisions were put in the form of resolutions or Gurmattas. The Gurmatta performed political, judicial and deliberative functions. According to Malcolm, "When the Chiefs met on this solemn occasion, it is concluded that all private animosities cease and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the shrine of the general good; and actuated by principles of power patriotism, think of nothing but the interests of religion and the commonwealth to which he belongs." The last Gurmatta was held in 1805. After that it ceased to be a political institution. There was no regular machinery to enforce the decisions of the Gurumatta except that of religion. For the sake of the honour of the Panth, the Sikhs were determined to enforce those decisions.

### Misl Organization

Every Misl had Sardar or Misdar at its head. He was practically supreme in his affairs. However, he did not interfere in the day-to-day affairs of his followers. According to Griffin, "All that a Sikh Chief demanded in those days from a follower was a horse and matchlock. All that a follower sought was protection and permission to plunder in the name of God and the Guru under the banner of the Chief. There was little question of pay." According to George Thomas, "Within his own dominion, each Chief is lord paramount. He exerts an exclusive authority over his vassals, even the power of life and death and to increase the population of his districts, he proffers a ready and hospitable asylum to fugitives from all parts of India." The Misl administration was essentially village administration. Every village was a small republic. There was a panchayat in every village. "The Panchayats of Council of Elders restrain the stronger and the weaker against any aggression." The common plea was that God acted through Panchayat (**Panchayat men Parmeshwar**). Villages were of two kinds, those directly administered and those under Rakhi or protection only. From the former, one-fifth of the produce was taken. A similar charge was made from the villages under the Rakhi system. The Rakhi system of the Sikhs was similar to the Chauth system of the Marathas.

It is difficult to calculate the exact fighting strength of the Sikh Misls. Various estimates have been made by different writers but it is generally believed that their total strength was about one lakh. It increased under Ranjit Singh. The backbone of the armies of the Misls was the cavalry. There was no regular training for

the soldiers. There was regular organization of the forces of these Misls. The weapons commonly used by them were swords, spears, matchlocks, sabres, etc. The soldiers of the Misls believed more in guerilla warfare than in pitched battles.

### **The Twelve Misls—Faizalpuria or Singhpuria Misl**

The founder of this Misl was Nawab Kapur Singh. He was considered to be the leader of the Sarbat Khalsa. From 1734 to 1748, he was practically the head of the Khalsa in all religious and political affairs. As he participated in a large number of battles, he had more than 43 scars of wounds on his body. He was not only a great fighter but also a great propagandist of Sikhism. No wonder, he converted a large number of persons to Sikhism. When he died in 1753, he was succeeded by Khushal Singh who was also a great warrior. In 1796, he was succeeded by his son Budh Singh. This Misl was annexed by Ranjit Singh in 1816. The territory of this Misl was to the east and west of the Sutlej. The important places within the territory were Jullundur and Patti.

### **Ahluwalia Misl**

This Misl was founded by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. To begin with, he worked under Nawab Kapur Singh. He came to the forefront in 1738. After the invasion of Nadir Shah, he started fighting against the Muslim Chiefs in the Punjab. In 1747, he plundered Kasur. He also carried on his work of destruction in the Jullundur Doab. In 1748, Jassa Singh was chosen as the leader of the Dal Khalsa. After the death of Nawab Kapur Singh in 1753, Jassa Singh became the leader of the entire Sikh community and came to be known as "Sultan-ul-Kaum." According to Griffin, "Kapur Singh was, as long as he lived, the first of the Sikh Sardars, though Jassa Singh had obtained more than the lion's share of the fame. When Kapur Singh was dying, he made over to Jassa Singh the steel mace of the last great Guru, thus appointing him, as it were, the successor to his influence which Jassa Singh by his ability and courage, considerably increased."

Jassa Singh defeated Khawaja Obed, Governor of Lahore, and took up the title of Padshah. In 1762, he suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Ahmed Shah Abdali. However, the Sikhs under Jassa Singh recovered very soon and were able to defeat the Afghan Governor in 1763. After the invasions of Ahmed Shah, Jassa Singh extended his territory. He died in 1783. Jassa Singh occupies a very high place in the history of the Sikhs. He has been recognized as "a most successful general in the field."

He was succeeded by Bhag Singh who himself was succeeded in 1801 by Fateh Singh. The latter was a brave general. Even Ranjit Singh had not the courage to fight against him and entered into friendly relations with him. He was succeeded in 1837 by Nihal Singh whose successors continued to rule the Kapurthala State till it was merged into Patiala and East Punjab States Union.

### **The Bhangi Misl**

This Misl was founded by Sardar Hari Singh. It was the strongest Misl, both territorially and numerically. Hari Singh extended the boundaries of the Misl up to Pak-Pattan. Lahore and Amritsar were included in the territory of this Misl. Hari Singh was succeeded by Jhanda Singh under whom the Misl reached the height of its glory. He conquered Jammu, Kasur and Ramnagar. The famous gun known as Zamzama was captured. When he was murdered in 1774 by a mercenary, he was succeeded by his brother Ganda Singh. After his death in 1782, the Misl began to decline and no wonder it was annexed by Ranjit Singh without much difficulty.

### **Ramgarhia Misl**

This Misl was set up by Jassa Singh Ichhogilia. He joined service under Adina Beg but when the latter attacked Amritsar in 1748, the former went over to the Sikhs and saved them from a great tragedy. In 1777, the Ahluwalia, Sukarchakia and Kanheyia Misls combined together and drove Jassa Singh to the south of the Sutlej. After that Jassa Singh retired to Haryana and conquered some territory near Hissar and Sirsa. Then he attacked Meerut and Delhi. In 1783, he was able to recover all his original possessions. He died in 1803 and was succeeded by his son, Jodh Singh. After the death of Jodh Singh in 1814, Ranjit Singh annexed Ramgarhia Misl.

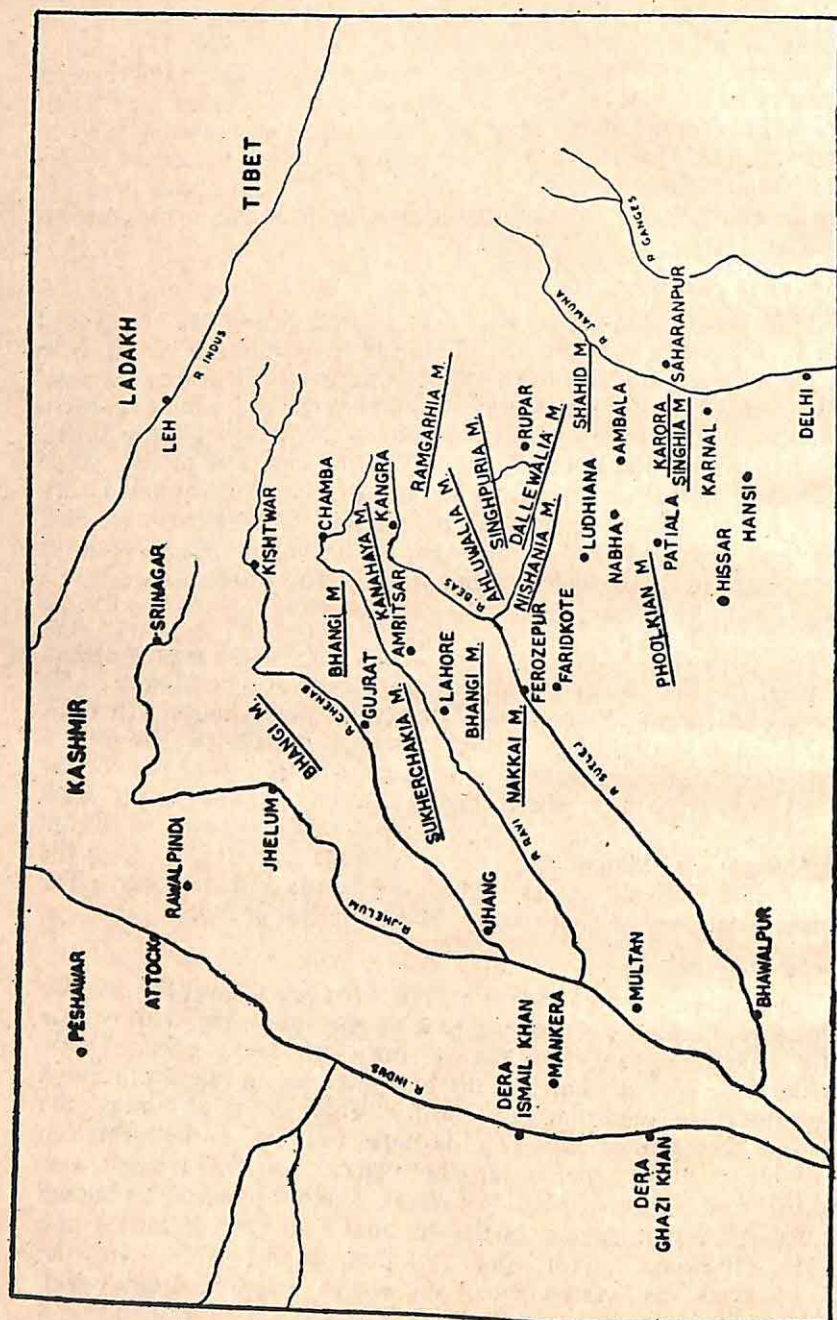
### **Kanheyia Misl**

This Misl was founded by Jai Singh who was a great warrior. He came to the forefront after the death of Mir Mannu. He conquered Mukerian, Pathankot, Gurdaspur and Kangra. In 1777, he joined hands with others to fight against Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and defeated him. However, when differences arose among the members of the coalition, the Ramgarhia Chief was able to get back his possessions. Jai Singh married his grand-daughter to Ranjit Singh, the son of Mahan Singh, the Sukarchakia Chief. After the death of Jai Singh, power fell in the hands of Sada Kaur. The Kanheyia territory was annexed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

### **Sukarchakia Misl**

The founder of the Sukarchakia Misl was Charat Singh. By the age of 31, he was able to secure a large following with whose help he conquered some of the territory of the Rachna Doab. When he was 35, he married the daughter of Sardar Amir Singh of Gujranwala. According to Latif, "This marriage united the wealth and strength of the two Sardars and led to the formation of a separate Misl which, after the place where they resided, was named the Sukarchakia Misl." Charat Singh attacked Eminabad which was the headquarters of the Mughal Faujdar and turned him out. He attacked Sialkot and captured it in 1758. He defeated in 1760 the Governor of Lahore who attacked Gujranwala. In 1762, he "harassed the march of Afghans and plundered their baggage." He also plundered Wazirabad. However, he was killed in 1774.

Charat Singh was succeeded by Mahan Singh who was a minor at that time. After six years, he took the reins of government into his own hands. He not only subdued his dependent chiefs but also



conquered Rasul Nagar and Alipur. He attacked the Jammu territory and destroyed most of it. In alliance with Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Mahan Singh defeated Jai Singh of the Kanheya Misl.

After the defeat, Jai Singh agreed to marry his grand-daughter to Ranjit Singh, the son of Mahan Singh. This marriage also added to the prestige of the Sukarchakiya Misl. When Mahan Singh died in 1793, he was succeeded by Ranjit Singh who ultimately established a sovereign Sikh state in the Punjab after defeating all the rival chiefs on the other side of the Sutlej.

### **Phulkian Misl**

Chaudhary Phul was the founder of this Misl. He was the common ancestor of the chiefs of Patiala, Nabha and Jind. It is stated that Guru Har Rai gave the following blessings to Phul: "The steeds of Phul's descendants shall drink water as far as the Jumna. They shall have sovereignty for many generations and be honoured in proportion as they serve the Guru." Phul's sons were also blessed by Guru Gobind Singh. However, it was under Baba Ala Singh (1696-1765) that the Phulkian Misl came into prominence. He extended his territory in the neighbourhood of Barnala. In 1762, Baba Ala Singh was appointed as his deputy by Ahmed Shah Abdali in Malwa region. Ala Singh was to pay an annual tribute. In 1764, he joined hands with Sikh Sardars to attack Sirhiad. In 1765, Ahmed Shah Abdali bestowed upon him a drum and banner which were the insignia of royalty. Baba Ala Singh led a very pious life. However, he died in 1765.

Ala Singh was succeeded by Amar Singh and it was under him that the Phulkian Misl became very strong. He conquered Mani Majra, Kotkapura, Bhatinda, Hansi, Hissar and Rohtak. He was so powerful that he was given the title of "**Raj Ragan Bahadur**" by Ahmed Shah Abdali. He struck coins in his own name. All efforts to check his power failed.

Amar Singh was succeeded by Sahib Singh. He was a weak ruler and the Marathas attacked his territory. However, they were defeated by his sister. There were dissensions in his family and Maharaja Ranjit Singh of the Sukarchakiya family tried to annex the Phulkian Misl. At that time, the English East India Company intervened and by the Treaty of Amritsar of 1809, Maharaja Ranjit Singh agreed not to interfere into the affairs of the Cis-Sutlej states.

### **Dallewalia Misl**

Gulab Singh was the founder of the Dalle-walia Misl. However, the most important personality of this Misl was Tara Singh Gheba. He was a great warrior. He attacked Sirhind and Kasur. After his death, this Misl was annexed by Ranjit Singh.

### **Nishanwalia Misl**

It was a petty Misl. Its founders were Sangat Singh and Mohar Singh. Their main possessions were Ambala and Shahbad. Ranjit Singh fought against this Misl and was able to capture certain parts of its territory. When the Cis-Sutlej territory came under the protection of the English East India Company, Ambala lapsed to the British Government and Shahbad became a dependency of the British Government.

### Karorsingha Misl

Another name of this Misl was Panjgarhia Misl. It was under Bhagel Singh that this Misl came into prominence. He and his successor Jodh Singh extended their conquests into the Malwa region. However, later on, most of their territories were either annexed by Ranjit Singh or absorbed into the Kalsia state.

### Shahidis' Misl or Nihangs' Misl

Shahidis' Misl or Nihangs' Misl was founded by those Sikhs who were murdered by the Muslims. Baba Dip Singh was the first leader of this Misl. The other important leaders were Sardar Karam Singh and Gurbaksh Singh. Their territory was in the east of the Sutlej.

### Nakai Misl

Sardar Hira Singh was the founder of this Misl. It was from Bhai Mani Singh that Hira Singh got his **Pahaul** at the age of 30. In course of time, he was able to bring under his control a small territory lying between Lahore and Gogera in the direction of Multan. Hira Singh was succeeded by Nahar Singh in 1769 but he died three years after. Ram Singh succeeded Nahar Singh. He was a very powerful chief and ruled over Chunian, Sahiwal, Sharakpur and Kot Kamalia. The Misl began to decline after his death and was annexed in 1807 by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

It is to be observed that most of the above Misls were annexed by Ranjit Singh and some of them accepted the protectorate of the English East India Company,

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## CHAPTER XI

# Mughal Administration

### Sources of Information

As regards the sources of the study of Mughal administration, those are scattered at many places. The *Ain-i-Akbari*<sup>1</sup> of Abul Fazl is a mine of information but it "does not give us much help in drawing a correct and detailed picture of the administrative machinery" (Sarkar). Some information is given by the *Dastur-ul-Amals* or official handbooks which were prepared in the time of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. The so-called "Manual of the Duties of Officers" found by Sir Jadunath Sarkar from Patna also gives useful information. The *Iqbal-Namah Jahangiri* by Mutamad Khan, the *Padshah Namah* of Abdul Hamid Lahori, the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* of Nizam-ud-Din and *Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh* of Badauni also give useful information. The writings of foreigners like Sir Thomas Roe, Bernier, Hawkins, Manucci, Terry, etc., also throw welcome light on certain aspects of Mughal Administration. The contemporary factory records of the English Company are useful in many ways.

### Nature of Mughal Government

The Mughal administrative system was in the nature of a military rule and was necessarily a centralised despotism. So far as the Muslims were concerned, the King was the head of the State and the Church. As regards the non-Muslims, he was only their temporal head. The government did not interfere very much with the life of the people. Much of it was left undisturbed by the government.

The Mughal administrative system took its colour from the ways and creed of its sovereigns. They were foreigners who came from outside. They were accustomed to a certain system of administration and when they came to India, they transplant-

1. According to Mr. Croke, "No one who reads *Ain-i-Akbari*, the cyclopaedic annals of his rule, fails to be conscious of certain lack of departmental perspective. Akbar was master of details, but detail is pushed to extreme—we learn little of essentials of the administration." J. E. Redd says: "What trust is to be placed in the figures of the *Ain-i-Akbari*—it may be questioned whether it was an ideal assessment or whether it was ever collected for the state."

ed the same in this country. According to J. N. Sarkar, "The Mughal Administration presented a combination of Indian and extra-Indian elements; or, more correctly, it was the Perso-Arabic system in Indian setting. The principles of the Government, their church policies, their rules of taxation, their departmental arrangement and their very titles of the officials were imported ready-made from outside India. But a compromise was effected with the older native system already in possession of the field and familiar to the people governed. The details of the imported system were modified for the local needs. The existing Indian practice and the customary laws were respected as far as it did not run counter to the root principles of all Islamic governments; and generally speaking in village administration and the lower rungs of the official ladder the Indian usage was allowed to prevail while the foreign swayed almost exclusively the court and the higher official circles."

The Mughal Government was military in its origin and though in time it became rooted to the soil, it retained its military character to the last. All the civil servants were Mansabdars or members of the army. Their names were arranged in the gradation list of the army as they were paid by the Bakshi. Strictly speaking, there was no civil treasury at all. The land revenue system of the Mughals was based on the old Hindu system prevailing in the country. The old Hindu revenue officials were employed by the Mughal Government and ordinarily were not interfered with.

In the Mughal period, the state was the largest manufacturer or the only manufacturer on a large scale. The state had to manufacture to satisfy its own needs which were very great. The Emperor gave robes of honour or Khilats to his mansabdars. Such a thing happened on many occasions. Many things were required for the use of the Emperor. Thus, sheer necessity forced the Mughal kings to manufacture on a large scale.

The Mughal Government was a highly centralized autocracy. The Crown was the pivot of the entire administrative machinery. As the government was absolute and highly centralized, the written records multiplied. No wonder, the Mughal Government was called a **Kaghzi Raj** or paper government. A large number of books had to be maintained, e.g., copies of correspondence, nominal rolls, descriptive rolls, history of the services of the officers, news-letters and despatches, etc.

The attitude of the Mughal Government towards law and justice was opposed to modern conceptions. It was the weakest in this matter. The Government did not perform its responsibility of maintaining peace and security in the rural areas. The villagers were made responsible not only for the safety of their own property but also of the travellers on the neighbouring roads. The existence of the office of the Faujdar is not denied, but the area within his jurisdiction was so large that it was out of the question for any individual to perform his duties satisfactorily.

#### **Position of Mughal Emperor**

The Mughal Emperor was the head of the administration.

According to the Quranic theory, the Mughal Emperor was the ruler of the Muslims only (Amir-ul-Munnin, or Commander of the true believers). He was nominally responsible to the Muslim public or Jamait for his conduct as a king. There was no check on his powers, but in actual practice his autocracy was tempered by the fear of a rebellion. Customary law of the country also put a check. The Ulema had the power to depose a king, but their Fatwas were a mere scrap of paper so long as the Mughal Emperor had a strong army at his disposal.

Both Babur and Humayun acted upon the Islamic theory of kingship, but Akbar rejected it. Instead of being the Commander of the true-believers only, he decided to become the king of all his subjects. His view was that in spite of thousand virtues, a king "cannot be fit for his lofty office, if he does not inaugurate universal peace, and if he does not regard all classes of men and all sets of religions with a single eye for favour" (*Akbarnama*). Akbar also believed that the king was superior to all the human beings and was the shadow and vicar of God. According to Abul Fazl, "Royalty is a light emanating from God, a ray from the sun, the illuminator of the universe, and argument of the book of perfection. the receptacle of all virtues" Akbar also believed that there should be a union of religious and secular leadership and that is why he tried to combine those two in his own person. Jahangir followed to some extent the ideal of his father. However, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb again adopted the Islamic theory of sovereignty.

There was no accepted law of succession among the Mughals. After the death of a king, there was always some trouble. In the case of Shah Jahan, it lead to a war of succession among his four sons. The contest was not confined to the sons of the last ruler. It is well-known that when Akbar was lying ill, Prince Khusrau, his grandson, tried to oust his father Jahangir. Even if a person was nominated as his successor by the dying king, it did not carry much weight. Although Akbar ultimately appointed Jahangir as his successor, Khusrau revolted in the time of Jahangir to claim the throne. Although Jahangir nominated Shahriyar to succeed him, he was ousted by Shah Jahan. Even the eldest son did not always enjoy any special position. Aurangzeb was not the eldest son of Shah Jahan and even then he came to the throne.

It is to be noted that the Mughal Emperor in India did not recognise any Khalifa as a superior overlord.<sup>1</sup> At the time of the

1. In 1517, the Egyptian Caliph Mutwakkil surrendered to Salim of Turkey all symbols of the Caliphate. Mecca and Medina had already been occupied by the Turks. A majority of the Sunnis all over the world began to look upon him as the Caliph. Babar and Humayun took up title of Padshah and were not prepared to accept any superior in the world. So far as Akbar was concerned, the Khutaba was read in his name. He also started the practices of Sijda or prostration on the ground and Zaminboos or kissing the ground in front of the royal throne. In 1579, Akbar was declared as Imam-i-Adil, Amirul-Mominin and Mujtahid-i-Ala. The descendants of Akbar also regarded themselves as fully sovereign and did not recognise the superiority of anybody, whether directly or indirectly.

succession to the throne, the coronation ceremony was performed. It was not necessary that it must be performed at the capital of the empire. In the case of Akbar, it was performed in the Gurdaspur District of the Punjab. Murad and Shah Shuja proclaimed themselves as kings while they were away from the capital. When the new king sat on the throne, he was saluted by cries of "**Badshah Salaamat.**" Very often, the new king took up a new title. Prince Saleem took up the title of Jahangir, and Prince Khurram became Shah Jahan. Aurangzeb took up the title of Alamgir. The Khutba was read in the name of the king and coins were also struck in his name.

The Mughal emperors enjoyed many prerogatives. There were some prerogatives which were the exclusive privilege of the sovereign and could in no case be exercised by any other person in the State. **Jharokha-i-Darshan** was one of those prerogatives. This custom was started by Akbar but was stopped by Aurangzeb. Every morning the emperor appeared at a balcony in the eastern walls of the Agra and Delhi forts when he was there so that his subjects might have a full view of his face. Many people looked upon the sovereign as a partial incarnation of God and abstained from food and drink as long as they had not have his Darshan. Another prerogative was **Chauki and Taslim-i Chauki**. The principal nobles of the emperor had to mount guard and go round the palace by turns. They were required to offer obeisance in the direction of the palace at stated hours of the night. Another prerogative was known as **Naqqara**. When the emperor held court or went out, a powerful kettledrum was beaten. This privilege could be exercised by other nobles with the permission of the King. The emperor alone had the prerogative to confer titles on his subordinates. Amirs and Mansabdars could only recommend suitable persons for this purpose, but the emperor alone could confer the titles. The emperor alone could affix his special seal (Muhar). In special cases, he gave a vermilion print of his palm (Panja) on the Farmans issued by him. The emperor alone had the prerogative of ordering the mutilation of limbs. The witnessing of elephant fights was a special prerogative of the emperor. The emperor adopted the Hindu practice of Tula-dan or weighing against articles for charities. The emperor alone had the exclusive privilege of weighment against gold and jewels, while the others could get themselves weighed against other things.

The Mughal kings worked very hard. They kept longer hours and enjoyed lesser holidays. The king transacted his business in four different ways. He transacted state business in public while sitting in the Diwan-i-Khas-o-Am. In the Ghushl Khana, the king held confidential consultations with his ministers and other officials he cared to summon. The Ghushl Khana was a place of retirement for doing important work. Commanders of the expeditions were called to this place before they were sent to the front. Likewise, governors were summoned to this place before they were ordered to join their appointment. There was superintendent of the Ghushl Khana whose duty was to see that those who came to the Ghushl Khana observed certain rules of etiquette. Persons guilty of an offence were fined and they were not allowed to leave till they paid the same. In the Ghushl

Khana, Akbar had his religious discussions also and Jahangir had his cups of wine. Sometimes, the King summoned a few of his highest officials inside his private apartments to discuss and dispose of important business with them. Once a week, the King held the court of justice. This he did on Wednesdays when the Diwani-i-Am-o-Khas was converted into a Court of Justice. The aggrieved persons were presented before the Emperor by the Superintendent of the Court and the King tried to give justice to the people.

According to S.R. Sharma, "Though the Mughals came to India as conquerors and foreigners, they set up traditions and conventions which were calculated to endear them to their Indian subjects. The Emperor's appearance at the Jharokha for popular **Darshan** daily, the opportunities they offered to the people to approach them with their petitions, their personal attention to minute details of administration and their regular inspection tours and pageants throughout the Empire, even apart from their generally enlightened and benevolent policy in all matters, served to impart to their autocratic rule the appearance of government by consent. This character was largely the creation of Akbar's statesmanship. It was sustained during the next two reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, but was progressively undermined by the reactionary policy of Aurangzeb. Nevertheless, the main framework of the administrative organisation, though in a considerably attenuated form, endured till the English East India Company stepped into the shoes of the Mughal Emperors."

Sir J.N. Sarkar says: "The Mughal Emperor had no regular Council of Ministers. The Wazir and the Diwan were the richest persons below the Emperor, but the other officers were in no sense his colleagues. They were admittedly inferior to him and deserved rather to be called secretaries than ministers. Nearly all their work was liable to revision by the Wazir and Royal orders were often transmitted to him through him." It was not necessary for the king to consult his ministers on all occasions. He could act even without them or against them. Neither the ministers nor the Wazir acted as a check on the authority of the king. The Mughal Government was a one-man rule and Aurangzeb was his own Prime Minister.

The Mughal Emperor had to play a double role. He had to govern all the people in his dominions as their king and also act as the missionary, defender and agent of the creed of a section of his subjects.

### Departments

As was to be expected, there were many departments of the Government, but the following were the most important :—

1. The Exchequer and Revenue under the High Diwan or Diwan-i-Ala.
2. The Imperial Household under the Khani-Saman or High Steward.

3. The Military Pay and Accounts Office under the Imperial Bakshi.
4. Canon Law, both Civil and Criminal, under the Chief Qazi.
5. Religious endowments and charity under the Chief Sadar.
6. Censorship of Public Morals under the Muhtasib.
7. The Artillery under the Mir Atish or Daroghai-Topkhana.
8. Intelligence and Posts under the Darogha of Dak Chauki.
9. Mint under a Darogha.

### **The Wazir or Diwan**

The Wazir was the Prime Minister. He was always the head of Revenue Department, but that was in his capacity as Diwan. However, all Diwans were not Wazirs. In the times of Akbar, the Prime Minister was called Wakil and the Finance Minister was called Wazir. Originally, the Wazir was the highest official of the Revenue Department, but in course of time, he came to exercise control over other departments also. The Wazir controlled the army also when the king was either incompetent, or a minor or a pleasure-seeker. The post of Wazir was a civil one and it was only in abnormal times that he was expected to perform military duties.

The office of the Wazir got revenue papers and returns and despatches from the Provinces and the armies in the field. On many ceremonial occasions, he acted as the representative of the king. All orders of payments had to be signed by him and all payments were made through his department only. Under the directions of the Emperor, he himself passed orders. All questions concerning revenue affairs were settled by him and he consulted the Emperor only in important cases. He had two assistants known as the Diwan-i-Am or Diwan of Salaries and the Diwan-i-Khas or Diwan of crown lands. After the death of Aurangzeb, Wazir became virtually the ruler of the state.

### **Mir Bakshi**

Bakshi was the Paymaster. According to Ibn Hasan, Bakshi's "influence extended to all departments of the Central Government." As all the officials, whether serving in the civil or military departments, were Mansabdars and "theoretically belonged to the military department," their pay bills were scrutinised and passed by the Paymaster. It was his duty to appoint persons who were to lead the vanguard, centre and the wings. He also recruited the soldiers. It was his duty to keep an account of the number of horses which were to be maintained by the Mansabdars.

The duties of Mir Bakshi have been described thus: "The

recruitment of the army, the maintenance of the troops in good order, holding of military tests, the inspection of horses, and the muster of troops at regular intervals, and equipping them for expeditions." Although he was called Imperial Paymaster, he was responsible for disbursement of salaries and their expenditure when the army was actually fighting. Ordinarily, that work was left to the Diwan.

### **Khan-i-Saman**

He was the Lord High Steward and was thus in charge of the Emperor's department of manufactures, stores and supply required for military and household purposes. He accompanied the Emperor in his journeys and campaigns. He controlled the personal servants of the Emperor and was also in charge of the daily expenditure, food stores, tents etc., of the Emperor. On account of the importance of the office, it was occupied by trust-worthy and influential men. He exercised great influence. In certain cases, the Khan-i-Saman also became the Wazir.

### **Sadar-us-Sudur**

He was the Chief Sadar of the Empire. He was also called by the names of Sadar-i-Kul and Sadar-i-Jahan. This office was filled by persons who had a very lofty character. Sadar-us Sudur was the connecting link between the King and the people. He was the guardian of Islamic Law and the spokesman of Ulema. According to Ibn Hasan, the function of the Chief Sardar seems "to have been limited to the use of his power for the award by the state of stipends and Jagirs to the Ulema and the needy." It was his duty to look into and decide cases relating to grants. He was the Almoner of the Emperor. He distributed the money for charitable purposes. There was a Sadar in every province. While sending the Provincial Sadars to their charges, the Chief Sadar acquainted them with the names of those who held rent-free lands. Each Sadar was to obey the Chief Sadar and carry out his orders.

### **Muhtasib**

He was the censor of public morals. It was his duty to enforce the commands of the Prophet and suppress all those practices which were un-Islamic. The punishment of heretical opinions, blasphemy against the Prophet and neglect of the five daily prayers and observance of Ramzan by Mohammadans also lay within the province of censor. In the time of Aurangzeb, they were given the duty of demolishing newly-constructed temples. Sometimes, they were asked to fix the prices of the goods and enforce the use of correct weights and measures. The Muhtasib was required to go through streets with soldiers and demolish and plunder liquor shops, distilleries and gambling dens.

### **Qazi-ul-Quzat or Chief Qazi**

The Chief Qazi was the highest judicial officer and was responsible for the proper and efficient administration of justice. As

the Khalifa of the age, it was the duty of the Emperor to give justice to the people, but as he had no time, the work was given to the Chief Qazi. He was "the judge in religious suits only and tried them according to Muslim Law." The Qazis of the Cities, Districts and the Provinces were appointed by him. These Qazis were helped by the Muftis. Most of the Qazis were corrupt. According to Sarkar, "All the Qazis of the Mughal period with a few honourable exceptions, were notorious for taking bribes."

### **Buyutat**

This title was given to the officer who registered the wealth and property of the deceased. He was required to calculate the amount due from the deceased to the state and deduct the same from his property. The balance was returned to the heirs of the deceased. His other duties were the fixation of the prices of the articles, making of provision for the royal **Karkhanas** and the preparation of an estimate of their output and expenditure.

### **Superintendent of Artillery**

To begin with, he was a subordinate of Mir Bakshi or Paymaster. As artillery became an important branch of the army, the Superintendent of artillery gained in importance. The Mir Atish was required to make arrangements for the defence of the Imperial Palace Fort. He came into personal contact of the Emperor and thus commanded great influence. He was in charge of all kinds of artillery.

### **Darogha-i-Dak Chauki**

He was the Superintendent of Intelligence and Posts. He had his agents everywhere. Horses were stationed at various stages for the use of the messengers. The latter brought news from every part of the country. The Superintendent was in charge of news-writers and news-carriers. He had to send weekly abstracts of the news to the Capital.

Other important officials were the Mir Bahri (Revenue Secretary), Mir Barr (Superintendent of Forests), Qur Begi (Lord Standard Bearer), Akht Begi (Superintendent of the Royal Stud), Mushrif (Chief Admiral and officer of harbours), Nazir-i-Buyutat (Superintendent of Imperial Workshops), Mustaufi (Auditor-General), Awarjah Nawis (Superintendent of daily expenditure at courts), Khwan Salar (Superintendent of Royal Kitchen) and Mir Arz (Officer who presented petitions to the Emperor).

### **Provincial Administration**

According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, "The Administrative agency in the Provinces of the Mughal Empire was an exact miniature of that of the Central Government." The number of provinces varied from time to time. In the time of Akbar, their number was 15. In the time of Jahangir, there were 17 provinces. The number increased to 22 in the time of Shahjahan. In the time of Aurangzeb,

the number was 21 only.<sup>1</sup>

### Subedar

The head of the province was known as the Sahib-i-Subah, Subahdar or Nazim. He was assisted by the Diwan, Bakhshi, Faujdar, Kotwal, Qazi, Sadar, Amil, Bitikchi, Potdar or Khizandar, Waqa-i-Navis, Qanungo and Patwari. Provinces were divided into Sarkars and Parganas. All the administration of the province was centralised at the capital town. The Mughals were essentially an urban people and no wonder they neglected the villagers. Village life was dreaded by them as a punishment. Villages were left free and were not interfered with so long as there was no violent crime or defiance of royal authority. The Subahdar possessed both civil and military authority. He was the representative of the king in the Province. He held his court but could not sit in the Jharoka. He could not declare war or make peace without the permission of the Emperor. He heard appeals from the decisions of the Qazis and Mir Adils, but he could not inflict capital punishment without the approval of the Emperor. He was in charge of the provincial forces. It was his duty to maintain order, to help the smooth and successful collection of revenue and to execute the royal decrees and regulations sent to him. He could not dismiss or appoint the Diwan and Sadar. He was not to interfere in the religious matters. He was to punish rebellious zamindars and lawless men. He was to send reports regarding the state of affairs in his Province. He was to encourage the peasants to improve agriculture. He was to help the Shaikhs and Qazis.

The Subahdars were transferred after intervals of two or three years. It was feared that if they continued to work at one place for a long time, they might abuse their powers or become independent. In spite of this, the governors were cruel and rapacious. In some cases, they were punished by the Emperor for their mistakes of omission and commission. The long distances from the capital of the Empire and the medieval means of transport and communication, enabled the governors to do whatever they pleased in their provinces.

### Diwan

The Provincial Diwan was the second officer in the province. He was also the rival of the Subahdar. Both the Subahdar and Diwan were to act as a check on each other. The Provincial Diwan was selected by the Imperial Diwan or Diwani-i-Ashraf. It was his duty to carry out the orders of the Imperial Diwan and

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1. Under Akbar, there were at first 12 provinces, viz., Kabul, Punjab, Multan, Delhi, Agra, Avadh, Allahabad, Bihar, Bengal, Malwa, Ajmer and Gujarat. After the conquest of the Deccan, three more provinces were created viz., Berar, Khandesh and Ahmednagar. (later on known as Daultabad). It was during the reign of Jahangir that Orissa was created a separate province out of Bengal. Under Shah Jahan, Kashmir was carved out of Kabul, Sindh out of Multan and Bidar out of Ahmednagar. Aurangzeb added Bijapur and Golconda as new provinces. For some time, Qandhar was a separate province under the Mughals but it was lost to Persia in 1648.

also to keep himself in touch with him. He was to collect revenue, try revenue cases and improve cultivation. He had control over the purse of the province and no payment could be made without his sanction. He was required to co-operate with the Subahdar in the administration of the province. If there was a difference of opinion between the Subahdar and the Diwan, the matter was referred to the Emperor.

The letter of appointment of the Diwan charged him with the following duties : "Cause the extension of cultivation and habitation in the villages. Watch over Imperial treasury that nobody may draw any money without due warrant. When due money is paid into the treasury from the chests of the fotehdars and other sources, give receipts (Qabz-ul-Wasul) to their agents. See that no official (Amil) exacts any forbidden cess (Abwab).

"At the end of every agricultural season, ascertain from the original rough papers (*i. e.*, first notes) the extortions and speculations of the Amils, and recover for the Imperial treasury whatever may be due from them on this account. Report bad or dishonest Amils to Government (*i. e.*, to the High Diwan) so that better men may be appointed to replace them.

"If any Amil has let arrears (of revenue) accumulate for many years, you should collect the due amount from the village in question by easy instalments at the rate of 5 per cent every season.

"The taqavi loan given last year by Government should be realized in the first season of the present year. If they fail to pay, or delay payment, Government will compel the Diwan and the Amin to make good the amount.

"Send the papers of your department to the imperial record office according to the regulations."

### **Faujdar**

Faujders were appointed to help the Subahdar. They were put in charge of important sub-divisions of the province. Their appointment and dismissal was in the hands of the Subahdar. They were commanders of the provincial troops. They helped the Subahdar to maintain law and order in the country and punish the rebellious zamindars. They were also to help the Amils in their work of revenue collection. According to Sarkar, the Faujdar "was only the commander of a military force stationed in the country to put down smaller rebellions, disperse or arrest robber gangs, take cognizance of all violent crimes, and make demonstrations of force to over-awe opposition to the revenue authorities or the criminal judge or the censor."

### **Sadar**

He was appointed by the Central Government and his main duty was to supervise the Sayurghals or rent-free lands granted for religious and charitable purposes. He had a separate office

of his own. He was more independent than the Diwan. He was a man of piety and learning. He could grant lands and allowances on his own initiative. He was respected by the people on account of his qualities of head and heart. Qazis and Mir Adils worked under him.

### **Amil**

Amil was a revenue collector and he had many duties to perform. He was required to deal very effectively with the rebellious Zamindars even if that led to the land remaining uncultivated. It was his duty to see that the quality of land improved and waste land was brought under cultivation. He was to see that the work of measurement of **Paimaish** of the land was done rightly. He was to supervise the work of revenue collection. He was to examine the registers of the Karkuns, Muqaddams and Patwaris. He was required to submit monthly reports concerning the condition of the people. He was to tour the country with a view to acquaint himself with the condition of the people.

### **Bakshi**

He was the paymaster of the provincial forces. He worked under Mir Bakshi.

### **Bitikchi**

He acted as a check on the Amil and enjoyed the same status as that of the Amil. He prepared abstracts of revenue every season and was required to send an annual report to the Central Government. He had to supervise the work of Qanungos. He was required to be a good writer and a skilful accountant. He was also required to be a master of the customs and regulations of his district.

### **Potdar or Khizandar**

His duty was to receive money from the cultivators and keep the same in the treasury. Whenever a payment was made to him, he issued receipts and kept their account. He was not to make any payment without a voucher signed by the Diwan. There were other officers as the Karkuns, Qanungos and Patwaris. Patwari was in charge of the revenue accounts. The duty of Muquddam was to keep order in the village and help the officials of the Government in the collection of state dues.

### **Kotwal**

The duties of the Kotwal are given in detail in the **Ain-i-Akbari**. Essentially, he was a police officer of the town, but he enjoyed magisterial powers in certain cases. He was responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the city. He kept watch at night and patrolled the city. He kept a register of houses and frequented buildings. He examined weights and measures and discovered thieves. He made a list of property of those who had no heir and also of the dead and missing persons. He was to see that no woman was burnt against her will. He was to employ

spies from among the obscure residents and observe the income and expenditure of the various classes.

Manucci says : "It is his business to stop the distillation of spirits. He has to see that there were no public women in the town nor anything else forbidden. He obtains information about all that goes on so as to be able to send in his report (to the ruler). For this purpose there are throughout the Mughal Empire certain persons known as house-scavengers. These men are under obligation to go twice a day to clean out every house and they tell the kotwal all that goes on. He is subordinate to the Qazi and receives orders from him. Under his orders, there is a considerable number of body of cavalry and a great number of foot-soldiers. In every ward, there is a horseman and 20 to 30 foot-soldiers who in a sort of way go to the rounds." According to Abul Fazl, "The appropriate person for this office should be vigorous, experienced, active, deliberate, patient, astute and humane."

The *Ain-i-Akbari* describes his duties in these words : "Through his night patrolling and watchfulness, the citizens should enjoy the repose of security and the evil-disposed lie in the slough of non-existence. He should keep a register of houses, and frequent roads, and engage the citizens in a pledge of reciprocal assistance, and bind them to a common participation of weal and woe. He should form a quarter by union of a certain number of habitations, and name one of his intelligence subordinates for its superintendence and receive a daily report under his seal, of those who enter or leave it, and of whatever events therein occur. And he should appoint as a spy one among the obscure residents with whom the others should have no acquaintance, and keeping their reports in writing employ a heedful scrutiny. He should minutely observe the income and expenditure of the various classes of men, and by a refined address make his vigilance reflect honour on his administration. Of every guild of artificers he should name one as a guildmaster, and another as a broker, by whose intelligence the business of purchase and sale should be conducted. From these he should require frequent reports. When the night is little advanced he should prohibit people from entering or leaving the city. He should set the idle to some handicraft...He should discover thieves and the goods they have stolen, or be responsible for the loss. He should so direct that no one shall demand a tax or cess save on arms, elephants, camels, cattle, sheep, goats and merchandise. He should suffer no alteration in the value of the gold and silver coin of the realm, and its diminution by wear in circulation he shall recover the value of the deficiency. He should use his discretion in the reduction of prices, and not allow purchases to be made outside the city. The rich shall not take beyond what is necessary for their consumption. He shall examine the weights and make the ~~ser~~ not more or less than 30 ~~dams~~. In *gaz*, he should permit neither decrease nor increase and restrain the people from the making, dispensing, buying or selling of wine; but refrain from invading the privacy of domestic life. Of the property of a deceased or missing person, who may have no heir, he shall make

an inventory and keep it in his care. He should appoint persons of respectable character to supply the public water-courses; and prohibit women from riding horses. He should direct that no ox or buffalo or horse or camel be slaughtered and forbid the restriction of personal liberty and the selling of slaves. He should not suffer a woman to be hurt against her inclination nor a criminal deserving of death to be impaled, nor any one to be circumcised under the age of twelve."

According to Sarkar, the Kotwal "should check the number of persons in the prison and ascertain answers of the charges against them. Then he should report to his official superior the cases of those prisoners whom he considers innocent and secure their liberation. In the case of the guilty persons who could pay, he could take orders for exacting suitable fines from them and then release them. In the case of penniless prisoners, the Kotwal should report and take action as commanded. A statement of all the cases of those deserving to be kept in prison should be sent to the officers of Canon Law, and the orders passed by the latter over their signatures should be carried out by the Kotwal. In the case of those deserving death, the Kotwal should, through proper officers, freely state their cases to the judge on the day of trial, receive the Qazi's signed sentence of death and execute the sentence."

### **Waqai-Navis**

He was the recorder of occurrences in the province. It was with the help of this person that the Central Government was kept in touch with the affairs of the provinces. The following passage which is in the form of an advice to a Waqai Navis gives some idea of his duties: "Report the truth lest the Emperor should learn facts from another source and punish you. Your work is delicate; both sides have to be served. Deep sagacity and consideration should be employed so that both the Shaikh and the Book may remain in their proper places. In the wards of most of the high officers, forbidden things are done. If you report them truly, the officers will be disgraced. If you do not, you yourself will be undone. Therefore, you should tell the Lord of the Ward. In your ward forbidden things are taking place, stop them. If he gives a rude reply, you should threaten the Kotwal of the ward by pointing out the misdeeds. The Lord of the Ward will then know of it. Although the evil has not yet been removed from the Ward, yet if anyone reports the matter to the Emperor, you can easily defend yourself by saying that you have informed the master of the ward and instructed the Kotwal. In every matter, write the truth, but avoid offending the nobles. Write after carefully verifying your statement."

### **Sarkars or Districts**

Every province was divided into many Sarkars or Districts. A Faujdar was in charge of a Sarkar. He was to carry out the orders of the Governor and also keep himself constantly in touch with them.

## Parganas or Mahals

Every Sarkar was divided into many Parganas or Mahals. In every Pargana, there was a Shiqdar, an Amil, a Potdar and a few Bitikchis. Shiqdar was in charge of the administration of the Pargana. His duty was to maintain law and order within his jurisdiction.

The Kotwal was the chief administrator of a town and his duties have already been explained above. Every city was divided into many wards or mohallas. It has already been pointed out that neither the Provincial Government nor the Central Government interfered with the people living in villages. Every village was considered to be an autonomous commonwealth.

## Relations between Centre and Provinces

In theory, the Central Government under the Mughals exercised considerable control over the provinces. The various officials in a province were transferred from one province to another after certain intervals so that vested interests may not develop and result in abuse of power. There was a regular machinery of supervision and control. The news-writers appointed by the Central Government and posted in the provinces kept the Centre informed of all that happened in the provinces. If any complaint was made against any official in a province, severe action was taken against him and if the news-writer failed to report the state of affairs in the province in which he was posted, he was also punished. The Mughal Emperors went on tours from time to time and the people could make their complaints in person. Sometimes the representatives of the people sent complaints to higher authorities and on that basis, orders for warning, transfer or dismissal were issued. The system of Dak Chaukies was made more efficient and thereby the Mughal capital was linked up with various parts of the Mughal empire and within less than a week news reached the Mughal capital from all parts of the empire. Thus, the Mughal emperors claimed that they exercised strict control over the provinces.

However, it cannot be said that the Central control over the provinces was in any way efficient in actual practice. There was a general saying that Delhi was far way and consequently the Governors and other officials of the provinces did whatever they pleased. They knew that they could do whatever they pleased without any punishment. It was possible that no complaint may reach the Central Government against them. The person oppressed could be forced to keep quiet in many ways. Pressure could be put on him and his relatives. They all could be threatened with dire consequences. Hence even if crimes were committed, the Centre did not have any knowledge of them. It is true that there are certain stories about people managing to come to Delhi or Agra from various parts of the empire and putting their complaints before the emperor but those cases must have been few and far between. With the existing means of communication and

transport, such persons could be intercepted on the way. Moreover, even if the complaints reached the Central Government, the emperor might not consider it politic to take action in the matter. Severe action might lead to a rebellion and the very existence of the empire may be threatened. No emperor would like to take such a risk. It is also pointed out that there were provinces like Kabul, Bengal, Gujarat and the Deccan where many would not like to go as Governors and hence the Central Government would hesitate to take any action against the Heads of those provinces even if they committed certain offences. It is also pointed out that the Subedars or the Faujdars could escape punishment by keeping the news-writers in good humour so that either the matter was not reported at all or the same was put in a very mild form.

### Measures to Ensure Integrity of Empire

The predecessors of Akbar did not think it safe to create a unit of administration as large as a province on account of the fear that the Governor of a province might become too powerful. However, when Akbar created provinces, he guarded against the possibilities of the Governors becoming too powerful. He made the Governor and Diwan independent of each other and thus a check on each other. As both of them had to take their orders directly from the capital, they could act as a check on each other. Moreover, the military forces stationed in a province had to look to the Bakshi for the payment of their salaries and for almost every other matter connected with their prospects in the services. His representatives accompanied every expedition and supplied, in their capacity as news-writers, an independent account of the affairs. Combining in himself the office of the provincial news-writer and the Bakshi, its holder could act as another check on an ambitious Governor. Akbar also did not allow vested interests to develop. He transferred the Governors from one province to another and did not keep a Governor for long in one place to harbour rebellious designs. The Emperor also frequently moved from one province to another, sometimes on a military mission and sometimes on an administrative tour. Those tours reminded his officials and his subjects that there was a "live" king above them. Another measure adopted by Akbar was that he preferred to pay his soldiers, minor officials and even the highest officials in cash and through his own agents, the Bakshis. Old types of Jagirs where the officials incharge had to collect the taxes, pay their own staff and the soldiers stationed there and also pay a fixed sum to the treasury, were no longer granted. A jagirdar was merely given the authority to collect a specified amount of his dues from his jagir, the income of which was otherwise settled by the Diwan.

Under Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, the custom of appointing a Governor to hold charge of more than one province destroyed some of the safeguards. The absence of Aurangzeb for more than a quarter of a century from the North upset everything. Payments by assignments increased and sometimes office-holders discovered that

they had been cheated as they could not collect the amount due to them from their jagirs.

### Military Organisation

The armed forces of the Mughals were divided into five main divisions, viz., cavalry, elephantry, infantry, artillery and matchlockmen and naval or river-craft. As regards the cavalry, Abul Fazl refers to six categories of cavalry troops. There were the contingents supplied by tributary Rajas and chiefs according to the terms of their submission. There were the **Mansabdari** troops which were subject to regulations regarding **Dagh** (branding) and **Chera** (descriptive roll) and muster. The **Ahadis** were the pick of the Mughal soldiery who were the personal contingents of the emperor and had a separate commandant of their own. The Barwardi were those skilled soldiers who could not maintain good horses on account of their poverty. They were employed as armed police to assist in rent collection and rounding up of bad characters. The **Dakhili** were those whose horses were branded but who were not attached to any Mansabdar and who were sent with Mansabdars who maintained no contingents of their own. **Kumakis** were those auxiliaries whose services were temporarily lent to certain Mansabdars at the time of war and who needed to be re-inforced by additional troops. The cavalry troopers were also divided on the basis of quality of their horses.

As regards the **elephantry**, there were seven categories of them. Their allowances varied according to their grade and quality. The **infantry** was divided into a number of classes. Some of them were mere camp-followers and menial servants. Some of them were employed as grooms, sappers, tentmen, etc. There were also real fighters such as archers, musketeers, fencers, wrestlers, gladiators etc.

The infantry included all kinds of people. They were not properly drilled and were not experts in the use of fire-arms. During the 17th century, the best musketeers were the Hindus of Buxar, the Bundelas, Karnatikis and the Bahelias. The Karnatikis were employed chiefly by the Sultans of Bijapur. The Bahelias were recruited in the province of Allahabad. About the general character of the infantry, W. Irvine says: "Until the middle of the 18th century when the French and English had demonstrated the vast superiority of disciplined infantry, the Indian foot soldier was little more than a night watch-man and guardian over baggage, either in camp or on the line of march." (*Army of the Indian Mughals*, p. 57).

As regards the **artillery**, guns and cannon were of different sizes and mobility. Some guns were very heavy and some were very light. The Gajnals were hauled up by elephants and light pieces of cannon were carried on the backs of camels. The artillery was under the special command of the Emperor. It was supplied to commanders as and when necessary. Heavy artillery was usually manned by Europeans only. Some commanders had matchlockmen under them. The requirement of such soldiers was confined to a particular group or locality. Aurangzeb suggested the recruitment of Kanojias or

people from Kanauj as matchlockmen. The use of artillery for matchlockmen was seldom co-ordinated with the strength of the rest of the army except when the two were associated in warfare for some period of time.

Babar used the artillery in 1526 in the battle of Panipat. Humayun had swivel guns carrying a heavy ball. Akbar paid special attention to the manufacture of cannon and matchlock guns. The heavy cannon were dragged by several elephants and thousands of oxen. Heavy cannon became the fashion of the day. Some of them are still preserved in different parts of India, e.g., Malik-i-Maidan at Bijapur, the Lilam Top at Junagarh and the great gun at Agra. However, it must be noticed that the heavy artillery of the Mughals was not very effective. Its fire was slow and inaccurate. It is well known that the heaviest artillery of Akbar failed against the fort of Asirgarh. The Portuguese artillery was more effective than the Mughal artillery.

Elephants and warboats were usually made available at the time of war. Bengal had a flotilla of warboats of its own and probably elephants as well. Both of them seem to have been under the control of the provincial governors.

The Mughals had no navy. The overseas trade was carried on by the Arab sailors. It is true that a contingent of Muslims left India every year for Haj and the Hajis were subjected to a lot of harassment, but the Mughals never took the trouble of having a Navy. The Mughal emperors were absolutely helpless against those who could work on the sea. European ships could not resist the temptation of committing acts of piracy in the Arabian Sea. The 'Feringi' pirates challenged the Mughal authority in the Bay of Bengal.

There was no division of the Mughal army into regiments or other graded divisions. A force 5,000 strong was usually a loose collection of smaller and ungraded units of varying sizes. It was a commander's army having no junior officers and not being organised into regular smaller units. The soldiers were parts of the main army or their own particular smaller units, but not of regular regiments of equal numerical strength.

A curious feature of the Mughal army was that the soldiers went to the battle on their own horses and with their own arms. If a horse was killed in the battlefield, the rider had to provide another at his own expense. It is contended that this system made the soldiers worry about safety of their mounts. They were more worried to protect their horses than to win a battle.

The soldiers and commanders were required to make their own arrangements for their supplies. There were no uniform and fixed standards of living in barracks or on battlefields. Great commanders liked to display their wealth even on the battlefield. The supplies were left to the mercies of private traders dealing with individual soldiers or unorganised groups of soldiers. The result was that it was easy for the enemies to strike at the Mughal armies by cutting off their supplies. This was particularly true of the Marathas who fought

against the Mughals successfully. The high salaries of the commanders made them pleasure-loving and easy-going. The low salaries paid to the soldiers made them less efficient.

There was no provision for regular parades. The only means of acquiring military training was employment in hunting, suppression of revolt and actual war. The result was that the soldier deputed in a province became slack and indolent. As the soldiers were not paid regularly, they oppressed the people to get whatever they wanted.

There is no unanimity of opinion among scholars with regard to the strength of the Mughal army. The view of Blochmann was that it was not more than 25,000. There is another writer whose view is that it ran into lakhs. It is pointed out that the Ahadis numbered 7,000 to 8,000. The number of war elephants was in the neighbourhood of 5,000. Good musketeers were about 40,000. The number of troops under Mansabdars and princes was between 2 to 4 lakhs. About the year 1647, two lakhs of troopers were brought for muster and branding. In addition to that, there were 8,000 Mansabdars, 7,000 Ahadis, 40,000 gunners and sappers, and 1,85,000 Tabinan, i.e., permanent soldiers recruited by the Centre but not included in the contingents of princes, nobles or Mansabdars.

The most efficient part of the Mughal army was stationed at the capital. It moved out only when the emperor went out for fighting. The defence of the capital was put into the hands of highly skilled soldiers. The rest of the army was scattered all over the empire. The Faujdar and the Subedar were responsible for maintenance of law and order in the provinces and they had an army under their control for their purposes. A substantial part of the army was stationed in the frontier outposts on the Kabul-Peshawar route. Competent generals were put in charge of those armies.

Forts played an important part in Mughal times. The important forts of that period were those at Allahabad, Kalinjar, Chunar, Rohtas, Ajmer, Gwalior, Delhi, Lahore, Ranthambore, Qandhar, Kabul, Asirgarh, Aligarh, Daultabad, Aurangabad, Bijapur and Golconda. A lot of care was taken to keep the defences of these forts in good order. Large stores of foodgrains, ammunition, etc., were stored in the forts. The forts were useful both for offensive and defensive purposes. Troops were stationed in the forts during the rainy season. Political prisoners were put in the forts of Gwalior, Asirgarh and Daulatabad.

Critics point out that the standing army at the disposal of the Mughal emperor was not adequate for the needs of a vast and growing empire. The result was that the emperor had to depend very much on the Mansabdars and their vassals. It is true that the Government paid for the maintenance of troops, but it had no direct control over them. As the salaries were paid through the Mansabdar, the soldiers looked upon him as their real master.

Moreover, no provision could be made for their effective training. The horses and the equipment of soldiers were not up to the mark and that took away from the efficiency of the army. In imitation of their masters, the Mughal Mansabdars carried with them their wives, concubines and their attendants. The result was that the Mughal armies resembled like moving cities and consequently were no match for the quick moving Marathas, Sikhs and Bundelas. The Mughals did not attach due attention to the manufacture of artillery in the country and they had to depend upon foreigners which was hardly proper.

Another defect in the Mughal military system was the pomp and show maintained in camp and on the march. It is true that on certain occasions, Akbar did not observe this custom. Such a thing he did in 1573 when he rode 50 miles a day with a small escort from his capital to Ahmedabad. However, the custom was usually observed. The result was that the Mughal army became an unwieldy moving city. The paraphernalia of the imperial court which followed the army included a portion of the harem and its attendants mounted on elephants and camels, a travelling audience hall, musicians, gallery, offices, workshops and bazars. A large number of elephants and camels carried the treasure. Military stores were transported by hundreds of bullock-carts. The imperial furniture and effects were carried by a large number of mules. Grant Duff has given a detailed description of Aurangzeb's camp at Ahmednagar and in that connection he observes thus : "The significance of such a spectacle which formed a remarkable contrast with the plain and even austere personal habits of the Emperor, was intended to strengthen his power by the awe with which it impressed his subjects ; but as his state was imitated by his nobles, it proved a serious encumbrance to the movements of his army, while the devouring expense of such establishments pressed hard on his finances and soon crippled even the most necessary of his military and political arrangements." (*History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I, p. 255).

A reference may be made to the foreign element in the Mughal armies. There was a general feeling in those days that the Persians, Afghans and Uzbeks were superior to the Indians in every way and consequently these foreigners were welcomed in the Mughal armies and were given the highest places. Particularly in the artillery and navy, the foreigners enjoyed great prestige. No effort was made by the Mughal emperors to train the Indians and thereby dispense with the services of the so-called foreign experts. These foreigners took no special interest or pride in the progress of India. They were merely adventurers and hence could not be relied upon.

### Police Organisation

The Mughal police organisation can be discussed under three heads : village police, district police and urban police. As regards the village police, the Mughal authorities allowed the old system coming down from the times of the Hindu rulers to continue. The headman of the village and his subordinate watchmen were allowed to continue with their work of maintaining law and order within their

jurisdiction. The villagers were made responsible for any loss incurred within their limits or any crime committed within their jurisdiction. They had either to recover the stolen goods or pay for the same. Neither Akbar nor his successors did anything to improve upon the old existing system.

The Faujdar was responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the district or Sarkar. His primary duties were the policing of the roads, the suppression of disorder of any kind and the collection of the state dues from the rebellious villages with the help of force. Even in the time of Akbar, there were constant outbreaks of disorder and the same must have been the case during the time of his successors. The result was that the Faujdars were fairly busy in their work. They had to use very often their troops. The punishments inflicted by them were very often cruel. In the case of highway robbery and theft, the Faujdar was required either to recover the property or to compensate the owner for the loss. Manucci tells us that in the reign of Shah Jahan the Faujdar had to pay compensation to anyone who was robbed on the road in the daylight. However, if the robbery occurred at night, the traveller was held to be at fault for not having halted earlier and he received no consideration or compensation at all. It is noteworthy that during the Mughal period, all travellers were required to stop their journey at sun-set.

The Kotwal was in charge of the urban police. He was required to keep a register of houses and roads. He divided the town into quarters and placed an assistant in direct charge of each quarter. The assistant was required to report daily arrivals and departures. The kotwal kept a small army of spies or detectives. He was required to apprehend thieves and find out the stolen goods. If he was not able to recover the stolen property, he had to make good the loss. He kept an eye on the currency. He fixed local prices. He checked weights and measures. He was required to maintain an inventory of the properties of the persons dying intestate. He set apart wells and ferries for the use of women. He stopped women riding on horse-back. He was required to prevent the slaughter of cattle. He kept a check on slavery. He expelled dishonest tradesmen from the urban areas. He allotted separate quarters to butchers, sweepers and hunters. He set apart land for burial grounds. As a matter of fact, he was expected to know every thing about everybody within his jurisdiction.

A lot has been said regarding the personal liabilities of the Kotwal for the goods stolen within his jurisdiction. Contemporary writers tell us that the Kotwals were always able to find out ways and means of evading and minimising their responsibility in actual practice. Thevenot tells us that during his journey in Surat, an Armenian whose goods had been stolen and had not been recovered was threatened with torture by the Kotwal unless he withdrew his complaint. In another case, there was a burglary. When the Kotwal was not able to find out the thieves, the complainant was beaten mercilessly and ultimately forced to admit that no burglary had taken place in his house. He was ordered by the Kotwal to get into the

hole which had been created by the thieves for the purpose of getting into his house and when he failed to do so, he was held to be a liar. Such cases must have been very frequent.

In spite of the above-mentioned police arrangements, public security varied from place to place and time to time. Professional robbers were always to be found in the hills and on the countryside where jungles were in plenty. Bands of marauders were frequently encountered in the open plains. No reliance could be placed on the road-watchmen. Even during the reign of Akbar, thefts and robberies were common on the roads. This is clear from the fact that one of the earliest orders passed by Jahangir after his coming to the throne related to the control of roads with a view to make them safe. Things became very bad after his death. On his journey from Surat to Agra, in 1609, 'William Finch found the roads full of thieves. This was particularly so between Burhanpur and Gwalior. Near Panipat, he saw "the heads of some hundred thieves newly taken, their bodies set on stakes a mile in length". In 1613, Nicholas Withington had a worse experience during his journey from Ahmedabad to Tatta in Sind. William Hawkins (1608-1613) tells us that "the country is so full of outlaws and thieves that almost a man cannot stir out of doors throughout all his-(Jehangir's) dominions without great forces". Peter Mundy who travelled in India between 1630 and 1633 tells us that the country "swarms with rebels and thieves". The outskirts of large cities were frequently marked by Chor Minars in which the heads of the criminals were set in plaster. He further tells us that at one place in the Kanpur district, he found as many as 200 such Chor Minars or pillars. When he came back after a few months, 60 more such Chor Minars had been set up. We find from the account of Bernier that the condition of the Upper Provinces was very unsatisfactory towards the close of the reign of Shah Jahan and the earlier years of Aurangzeb's rule.

There are references to Thugs operating during the Mughal period. Meadows Taylor and Balfour tell us that in the reign of Akbar, many thugs were executed. Thevenot tells us that during the reign of Shah Jahan, the road between Delhi and Agra was infested by thugs who "use a certain slip with running noose which they can cast with so much slight about a man's neck, when they are within reach of him that they never fail; so that they strangle him in a trice".

### Finance

The Finance Department of the Mughals was under Diwan-i-Ala. However, he appointed a number of officers to help him. Mustaufi acted as the Accountant General of the Empire. He looked into the accounts of all the Departments in the State. Diwan-i-Khalsa looked after the management of crown lands. Diwan-i-Jagir exercised administrative control over Jagirs. Diwani-i-Buyutat looked after State factories called the Karkhanas and heirless properties. Faujih looked after the accounts of the military department. There were Mushrifs for auditing the accounts

of different departments, sections or individual Karkhanas. Subordinates of different grades and categories worked under the above mentioned officers. The provincial Diwans and the staffs under them worked under Diwan-i-Ala.

The revenue of the State fluctuated from time to time. That was partly due to the changes in the territorial limits of the Empire and the changes in the rates of taxes. Even the nature of the taxes was changed from time to time. We have no definite data regarding the total income derived from various sources. However, it is pointed out that the annual revenue of Akbar, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb was 13½, 22½ and 38 crores respectively.

There were many sources of income of the Mughal emperors. The Zakat was realised only from the Muslims at the rate of 1/40 of their property. However, the poor among the Muslims were exempted. The payment of Zakat was considered to be an obligation towards God and his people. The revenue derived from this source was utilised for religious and humanitarian purposes for the benefit of the Muslims only. The duty on imports and exports was 2% ad valorem for Muslims and 5% for Hindus. In 1667, Aurangzeb exempted the Muslims from this duty. However, he re-imposed the duty on them when he found that the exemption was being abused by the Muslims in helping the Hindus. The emperor had monopoly rights over the Salt Range in the Punjab and Sambhar Lake in Rajputana and the revenue from these places went into the coffers of the State. The State also had monopoly of indigo and got some income from it. The revenue from mines, treasure-troves and war booty was known as Khums. The mines were given to private individuals for working them and the latter paid a tax amounting to 1/5th of the total annual income derived from them. The State owned more than 100 Karkhanas. Most of these Karkhanas were at the capital of the Mughal empire. A few were scattered all over the empire. These Karkhanas produced things like fine clothes, luxury goods, scents, war materials, presentation articles, artistic furniture, etc. The commodities manufactured in these Karkhanas were meant essentially for the court and the royal household and Departments of the Government. However, the surplus supply was put in the market and some income was got from it. Some revenue was derived from mint and currency. Jizya was another source of income. It was levied by Babar and Humayun but was abolished in 1564 by Akbar. In 1679, it was re-imposed by Aurangzeb. Jahangir was responsible for introducing the law of escheat. All property of the nobles was seized by the State after their death and it must have brought some money although not much as most of the Mansabdars lived extravagant lives. The emperor received valuable presents from his nobles on certain occasions in the year and those were also a source of income. The State realised tolls and ferry taxes from passengers by road or river. The sales tax was charged on all sales in the market. In some places, octroi was also charged. Tributes from vassal chiefs were also another source of revenue. However, the most fruit-

ful source of income was the land revenue. The rent from Khalsa lands was realised by the salaried officers of the State. Akbar made the tax payable by peasants in the Khalsa and Jagirdari land equal.

The chief heads of the expenditure of the Mughal empire were salaries payable to nobles, courtiers, Mansabdars, Qazis and the other staff, the court and the royal household, the maintenance of the army, gifts and rewards conferred by the emperor, cost of building and maintaining royal buildings, forts, mosques, tombs, etc., cost of raw material for the Karkhanas and cost of building and maintenance of roads, bridges, sarais, canals, etc.

### **Mughal Currency and Mints**

From the time of Mohammad Tughlak, the Indian currency was in a chaotic condition. Nothing was done by Babar and Humayun to regulate it. Sher Shah did his best to reform the irregularities by introducing a rupee of 175-178 grains and the copper Dam. It was left to Akbar to reform the currency. In 1577, he appointed Khwaja Abdul Samad of Shiraz as the master of the Imperial Mint at Delhi. He also put the provincial Mints under important imperial officials. Raja Todar Mal was appointed the master of the Bengal Mint and 4 other superior officers took charge of the Mints at Lahore, Jaunpur, Ahmedabad and Patna. Abul Fazl tells us that the permanent staff of the Mint at Delhi consisted of a Daroga, a Sairafi or Assayer, an Amin, a Mushrif or keeper of the day-book, merchant who purchased gold, silver and copper for the mint, a treasurer, a weighman, a molter of ore and a plate-maker. The coins issued by Akbar were those of gold, silver and copper. Gold coins were of 26 varieties of different weights and value. The Shansah weighed a little more than 10 tolas. The Ilahi was worth Rs. 10. There were other gold coins of smaller value. The coins were struck at 4 Mints only viz., Delhi, Bengal, Ahmedabad and Kabul.

The chief silver coin was the rupee of 172½ grains. Jalali was the square silver rupee issued in 1577. The chief copper coin was the Dam. It was also called Paisa. It weighed 323.5 grains or nearly 21 grammes. This was the most popular coin used by the rich and the poor. 10 Dams were equal to one rupee of 172½ grains.

The gold and silver used for the coinage was imported from outside. Terry tells us that the Mughals welcomed the people of any nation who brought bullion and took away merchandise from this country. It was a crime to take away silver from the country. The East India Company from the very beginning exported bullion to India. In 1601, the total amount sent to India was valued at about £ 22,000. In 1616, it was £ 52,000. Between 1697 and 1702, the annual value of the export of bullion to India was at least £ 800,000. In 1681, the bullion sent to Bengal alone was worth £ 320,000. The copper was got from the mines in Rajputana but as that was not sufficient, a lot of it was imported from outside.

### Administration of Justice

The Mughal Emperor was the Khalifa of the age. As such, he was the fountain of all justice. According to Sarkar, he was "the highest court of appeal and sometimes acted as the first instance too." The Mir Arz presented the applications of the people before the Emperor. We are told that there were seven Mir Arzs in the time of Akbar. That was due to the pressure of work.

Mughal Emperors were lovers of justice. Akbar is stated to have declared that "If I were guilty of an unjust act, I would rise in judgment against myself." According to Peruschi, Akbar was most zealous and watchful in the matter of administering justice. "In inflicting punishments, he is deliberate, and after he has made over the guilty person to the hands of the judge and court to suffer the extreme penalty or the mutilation of some limb, he requires that he should be three times reminded by messengers before the sentence is carried out." It is true that access to the Mughal Emperor was not easy. However, efforts were made to provide some sort of link between the Emperor and the aggrieved parties. Reference may be made in this connection to the golden chain of Jahangir which was hung for the benefit of the people. Other Emperors were also anxious to give justice to the people.

The Qazi-ul-Quzat was the highest judicial officer of the country. He was responsible for the proper and efficient administration of justice. However, according to Sarkar, there was "no system, no organization of the law courts in a regular gradation from the highest to the lowest, nor any proper distribution of courts in proportion to the area to be served by them." Cases were tried and disposed of by the Qazis, the Muftis and the Miradils.

The Qazis tried both civil and criminal cases of the Hindus and Muslims. While trying the cases of the Hindus, they were required to take into consideration their customs and usages. They were expected to be "just, honest, impartial, to hold trials in the presence of the parties and at the court house and the seat of Government, not to accept presents from the people where they served, nor to attend entertainments given by any body and everybody and they were asked to know poverty to be their glory." In spite of this ideal, the Qazis generally abused their powers and "the Qazis' department became a byword of reproach in Mughal times."

The Qazis were notoriously corrupt. They secured their appointments through bribery and they themselves accepted bribes on a large scale. Popular dislike and contempt for them is to be found in the following proverb: "When the Qazi's bitch died, the whole town was at the funeral: when the Qazi himself died, not a soul followed his coffin."

J. N. Sarkar says: "As the provincial Qazi's jurisdiction was very vast and he had no assistant or deputy locally appointed

to share his burden, only a small part of disputes in the province could be tried by him." No wonder most of the cases in the rural areas and even in the urban areas were decided by the Panchayats.

Foreign writers like Sir Thomas Roe point out that in the Mughal period there was no codified law as such. Likewise, there was no highest court of justice which could finally lay down the law for the country. The Mughals had three separate judicial agencies, all working at the same time and independent of each other. Those were the courts of religious law, court of secular law, and political courts. As regards the courts of religious law, those were presided over by the Qazis who decided cases according to Islamic law. However, the Qazi was never "considered authoritative enough to lay down a legal principle, elucidate an obscurity in the Quran or supplement the Quaranic law by following the line of its obvious intention in respect of cases not explicitly provided by it." The Qazis were helped by the Muftis who expounded the law. The Mufti was "urged" to spend his days and nights in reading books on jurisprudence and the reports of cases from which one can learn precedents." The Miradils drew up and pronounced the judgment.

Muslim law in India did not grow and change according to the circumstances and needs of the country. It merely reflected the changes of juristic thought in Arabia or Egypt. Even Akbar did not interfere with the administration of criminal justice which was based on Islamic law.

As regards the courts of secular law, they were presided over by Governors, Faujdars and Kotwals. In the time of Akbar, Brahmans were appointed to decide the cases of Hindus. The Panchayats also fell under this category. The courts of secular law were not under the thumb of the Qazi. Political courts tried political cases like rebellion, rioting, theft, robbery, murders, etc. They were presided over by Subahdars, Faujdars, Kotwals, etc.

There were three groups of crimes, viz., offences against God, offences against the State, and offences against private individuals. The four kinds of punishments were Hadd, Tazir, Qisas and Tashir. Hadd was a punishment for crimes against God. Tazir was punishable by public reprimand, dragging of the offender and exposing him to public scorn, boxing of his ears, scourging etc. Qisas was in the nature of retaliation. The relative of the victim was allowed to demand retaliation or compensation. Tashir involved public degradation. It was in the form of shaving the head of the offender, putting him on an ass, "with his face towards its tail, covered with dust, sometimes with a garland of shoes, placed round his neck" etc.

Malleon says: "The lines upon which justice was administered by the officers of Akbar were the same as those introduced by his Afghan predecessors. The Quran was the basis upon which the law rested. But precedents often modified the strict interpretation. Where law, moreover, leaned to severity, it was again modified by the instructions drafted by the emperor and his advisers. The

leading features of these instructions were to temper justice with mercy."

Sir J. N. Sarkar points out that "It is rather strange to note that manslaughter is not a violation of God's law nor of the king's peace but only a damage to the family of the murdered man, which can be settled by paying money as compensation to the next of kin of the victim without the executive head of the state or the judge of Canon Law having to take any further notice of it. It was only when the relatives of the murdered man refused to accept money damages and insisted on retaliation, that the Qazi had to pronounce the sentence of death and the executive to enforce it."

Corruption and bribery played an important part in the field of administration of justice. Only those could expect to have justice who had either money to bribe or influences to exercise. As there was no written law, there was great scope for discretion and hence corruption and favouritism. It is true that an appeal could be taken to the Emperor, but in most cases, this right came to nothing as the journey to the capital was a very long one and the same was also expensive. It was also possible that the local officer may not allow the aggrieved person to proceed to the capital. He may keep him back with force. However pressure could also be used in the form of *Hartal* to see that justice was done by the officer concerned. In civil cases, not only the property of the debtors could be auctioned for the satisfaction of the debt, the debtors were also liable to be sold into slavery or handed over as serfs to their creditors. The only hope for the debtor was that the creditor may not have enough money to bribe the officer concerned or sufficient influence to get the orders passed from the appropriate authority. It was a very expensive affair to set the machinery of civil law in motion in the Mughal times. A popular saying was: "To trust a Qazi is to court misfortune."

The condition of jails in the Mughal period was thoroughly unsatisfactory. Forts were used as jails and not much was spent on their maintenance. As a matter of fact, the policy of the Mughal emperors was not to favour imprisonment for long periods. They preferred fines, confiscation of property, mutilation of limbs or death to imprisonment in a jail. Executions were generally held on Tuesdays in the presence of the emperor. The use of torture was allowed to extort confession. In some cases, the tortured person even died. In the time of Aurangzeb, persons were detained for securing confessions. The detention in jail lasted as long as the accused did not become weak or submissive. He was let off earlier if he agreed to embrace Islam. Many persons were able to secure the release by bribing the jailors and very rarely they were re-arrested. Slow poisoning of the prisoners was also resorted to by giving them big doses of opium early in the morning. Such a practice existed in the fort of Gwalior. Sulman Shikoh was put to death by Aurangzeb by slow poisoning.

### **Mughal Public Service**

The Mughal Public Service set up by Akbar was essentially

military in character and was based on a system borrowed from Persia. Each official was the holder of a Mansab and was theoretically required to supply a certain number of troops for the service of the state. In 1573-74, the Mansabdar were classified into 33 grades. The highest Mansabdar was of 10,000 and the lowest of 10. Upto the middle of the reign of Akbar, the highest grade open to the ordinary official was a Mansab of 5,000 and the higher grades were reserved for the members of the royal family. Thus, prince Salem was a Mansabdar of 10,000. During the reign of his successors, a rank higher than that of 5,000 was given even to the members of the superior service and was not reserved for the members of the royal family. Each Mansabdar was entitled to a definite rate of pay and out of that amount he was required to pay the cost of maintaining his quota of horses, elephants, beasts of burden, carts etc. It appears that even during the reign of Akbar, the number of men actually supplied by a Mansabdar was less than the number indicated by his rank. A Mansabdar was not taken to task if he maintained a number less than the quota allotted to him. During the reign of Jahangir, it became a usual practice for a Mansabdar to maintain a lesser number of horses than indicated by his rank.

The number of Mansabdars was a limited one during the reign of Akbar. However, the same continued to increase during the reigns of his successors. This is clear from the following table compiled by Blochmann :

Number of Commanders of	Under Akbar	Under Jahangir	Under Shah Jahan
5,000 down to 500	249	439	563
400 „ „ 200	163	438	not known
150 „ „ 100	1,388	2,064	„ „

The permanent officials of the Mughal Empire were expected to perform military duties in addition to their general administrative and judicial functions. All Mansabdars were appointed by the Emperor. Their ranks were also fixed by him. A Mansabdar rose or fell in proportion to the fact whether he won the Emperor's favour or not. He who wanted to be appointed a Mansabdar had generally to get an introduction to the Emperor through a friend or patron of standing at the court. There were no general rules of promotion and much depended upon the goodwill of the Emperor. Raja Bihar Mal was directly appointed a Mansabdar of 5,000 although such a rank was reached by individuals by stages. As everything depended upon the sweetwill of the Emperor, the system was liable to abuse. However, the system worked well during the reign of Akbar but things continued to decline during the reigns of his successors. There was a steady lowering of standards and that could hardly be conducive to the efficiency of administration.

It is worthy of notice that most of the Mansabdars were foreigners. After a careful study of *Ain i-Akbari*, Blochmann has come to the conclusion that most of the officials of Akbar were foreigners and there were very few Hindustani Muslims in the upper grades of the

army and the civil service. The view of Moreland is that about 70% of the officials belonged to families which had either accompanied Humayun to India or arrived after the accession of Akbar. The remaining 30% were either Indian Muslims or Hindus. It is true that Akbar initiated a new policy of giving jobs to the Hindus but it appears that his policy was dictated by an ulterior move and was not based on the principle that career was open to all. This is proved by the fact that most of the jobs given by him to the Hindus were held by the Rajputs to the exclusion of other castes. In the course of 40 years, Akbar bestowed Mansabs or offices of more than 500 on 21 Hindus, of whom 17 were Rajputs including the Chiefs of Amber, Marwar, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Bundelkhand. He bestowed Mansabs of less than 500 on 37 Hindus of whom 30 consisted of Rajput princes of Chanderi, Karauli and Datia and the Rajput feudatories of the larger states. Of the four remaining appointments in the upper grades of 500 to 5000, one was given to Raja Bir Bal, one to Raja Todar Mal, one to his son and the fourth to another Khatri. It appears that Akbar's policy of employing non-Muslims in the public service was dictated by a desire to win over the Rajput chiefs so that the foundations of the Mughal Empire may be strengthened. Akbar also entered into matrimonial alliances with the Rajput families with the same object. His policy was continued by Jahangir and Shah Jahan. When Aurangzeb departed from that policy and excluded the Hindus from holding offices so far as possible, he brought about the ruin of his Empire. The following passage written by Prince Akbar in 1681 gives an idea of the sad state of affairs at that time : "The clerks and officers of state have taken to the practice of traders and are buying posts with gold and selling them for shameful considerations. Every one who eats salt destroys the salt-cellar."

The Mughal officials were paid in two ways. They either got their salary in cash from the treasury or they were granted a temporary estate or Jagir the estimated revenue of which was sufficient to defray all their official expenses. Like Sher Shah, Akbar was not in favour of granting Jagirs and whenever possible he preferred to pay in cash and converted the Jagirs into crown lands. However, during the reigns of his successors, the granting of Jagirs became very common. The officials preferred Jagirs to cash payments. One reason for their preference was that payments were not made promptly by the Treasury. Another reason for preference was that clever officials managed and manouvred to get estates which yielded a larger revenue than what was due to them.

Whether the officials were paid in cash or in the form of Jagirs, their emoluments were rather too much. According to the Ain-i-Akbari, the monthly salary of a first grade Mansabdar of 5,000 was Rs. 30,000/-, of a second grade official of the same class Rs. 29,000/- and of a third grade official of the same class Rs. 28,000/-. The Mansabdars of 1,000 belonging to the three grades got Rs. 8,200/-, Rs. 8,100/- and Rs. 8,000/- a month respectively. The Mansabdars of 500 received Rs. 2,500/-, Rs. 2,300/- and Rs. 2,100/- a month respectively. The Mansabdars of 100 got Rs. 700/-, Rs. 600/- and Rs. 500/- a month respectively. The Mansabdars of 10 got Rs. 100/-,

Rs. 82½ and Rs. 75/- a month respectively. The rupee of Akbar's times was equivalent to 2 shillings and 3 pence. The view of Moreland was that the purchasing power of one rupee of Akbar's time was more than 6 times than that of the Indian rupees in 1912. On the basis of these calculations, Moreland came to the conclusion that after deducting the cost of maintenance of the military forces, a Mansabdar of 5,000 received a net monthly salary of at least Rs. 18,000/- a Mansabdar of 1,000 at least Rs. 5,000/- and a Mansabdar of 500 at least Rs. 1,000/- a month. There were very many avenues to add to these emoluments by economies in the military expenditure, by securing a profitable Jagir or by accepting bribes. Mansabdars were very often found to be deceiving the Government in the matter of the maintenance of troops and horses. It is true that Akbar adopted certain measures to check false musters, but he was not completely successful. To quote W. Irvine, "False musters were an evil from which the Mughal army suffered even in its most palmy days. Nobles would lend each other men to make up their quota, or needy idlers from the Bazar would be mounted on the first baggage pony that came to hand and counted in with the others as efficient soldiers."

It appears that the Government was conscious of false musters. It was probably on that account that Shah Jahan started paying salaries for less than 12 months in a year. In order to neutralize the unauthorised profits of the Mansabdars, salaries in certain cases were paid only for 4 months in a year. Manucci, the Italian traveller, tells us that troops received only 6 to 8 months pay in a year. In respect of two months out of this, they received clothes and old raiment instead of cash. The system of short payments to the Mansabdars continued during the reigns of Aurangzeb and the consequences can well be imagined. The Mughal officials were not saints and if they were paid less, they helped themselves by putting forward more and more claims on the peasants and the industrial classes. The result was that the latter suffered terribly and thereby added to the discontent in the country.

It is true that the Mughal officials were paid high salaries so that the best of the people may be attracted from outside India to serve in this country. It was this temptation which attracted many foreigners to come to India and serve the Mughal administration. However, even the foreigners who came to India began to deteriorate rapidly on account of the atmosphere prevailing in the country. There was too much of ease and too many occasions to make money. A strong character cannot be maintained in such an atmosphere. In spite of the high salaries offered, the flow of foreigners into India slowed down and ultimately stopped after the death of Aurangzeb. Irvine points out that the result of this was that "The empire shrivelled like a tree cut off from its sap."

It is true that the Mughal officials were paid handsomely but that did not help matters. One reason was that they were required to maintain a very high standard of living. The net result was that not much was left in their pockets. Even if some managed to save, that money they could not hand over to their children on account of the

law of escheat which existed during the Mughal period. According to that law, all that was left at the time of the death of an official was inherited by the Government. If the Government was to inherit everything, there was absolutely no incentive to save. No wonder, most of the Mughal officials lived extravagant lives. The result was that they not only spent their money but also ruined their physique. That fact was partly responsible for the disintegration of the Mughal Empire.

There was one more evil from which the Mughal Civil Service suffered. Everything depended upon the will of the Emperor. He alone could give promotions. He alone transferred the officials. The result was that there were too many intrigues and too much of inefficiency. A lot of money was wasted at the time of frequent transfers. Naturally, the officials who had not many scruples tried to make up their loss by exploiting the people in one way or the other.

### **Criticism of Mughal Administrative System**

Reference may be made to some of the points of criticism levelled against the Mughal administrative system.

(1) It is contended that the **Mughal Administration was essentially foreign in its character**. A critical examination shows that there is partial truth in this statement. The Mughals were foreigners to begin with and officials from Persia were everywhere given preference. But it cannot be denied that from the time of Akbar, the Mughal Emperors were born and brought up in India and died in India. Hence, it may not be proper to call them foreigners. Moreover, while the high posts were reserved for foreigners, a very large number of smaller jobs were given to the Indians, Muslims and Hindus. Akbar was loved by his subjects on account of his policy of Sulh-kul. According to Tavernier, Shah Jahan "reigned not so much as a king over his subjects, but rather as a father over his family and children." According to Edwardes and Garret, "Modern India owes much more than is superficially apparent to the administrative genius of the Great Mughal."

(2) Another criticism is that the economic and social results of Mughal rule were disastrous to the prosperity and happiness of the people of India. It is pointed out that the Mughals left India much richer than they found her when they came to this country. They did not send any money to any foreign country as the Britishers did. According to Prof. Radhakamal Mukherjee, "Throughout the Mughal age, India maintained a balance of trade in her favour."

According to Moreland, "Weavers, naked themselves, toiled to clothe others. Peasants, themselves hungry, toiled to feed the towns and cities. India, taken as a unit, parted with useful commodities in exchange for gold and silver, or in other words, gave bread for stones. Men and women, living from season to season, on the verge of hunger, could be contented so long as the supply of food held out; when it failed, as it so often did, their hope of salvation was the slave trader and the alternatives were cannibalism, suicide or starvation. The only way of escape from that

system lay through an increase of production, coupled with a rising standard of life, but this road was barred effectively by the administrative methods in vogue, which penalised production and regarded every indication of increased consumption as a signal for fresh extortion." However, this extreme view is not accepted by other writers. It is pointed out that the condition of the people was not so miserable as is depicted by Moreland. According to Manucci, "All things are in great plenty here, fruits, pulses, grain, muslin, cloths or gold and silver." Things may have been bad in times of famine, but that was not always the case.

(3) According to Sir J.N. Sarkar, the Mughal Government was "extremely limited, materialistic, almost sordid". The socialistic activities of the modern state were ignored by the Mughal rulers and left to the society or caste brotherhood. However, it is pointed out that such was not the case in actual practice. The administrative machinery did attend to the regulation of weights and measures and prices of commodities, control of sale and manufacture of intoxicating drugs, control of prostitution, prohibition of forced **Sati**, regulation of private income and expenditure, the control of morals with the help of Censors of Public Morals, prohibition of cow-slaughter and forced conversions, punishment for drunkenness, etc. Thus, the Mughal State was not only a police state but something more than that. It did all that it could under the circumstances for the people.

(4) It is also pointed out that the Mughal administrative system admitted of no organic development. The whole system depended upon the Emperor. Everything went well so long as he was efficient. If he became a sluggard, there was a sharp decline in the efficiency of the administration.

(5) Another defect was that the standard of living expected from the officials of the Government was very high. They were required to live very luxurious lives with a view to impress the people. The result was that the officials found it difficult to live within their means and it was a big strain to remain honest and incorruptible. There was no scope for thrift and the constant fear of the Emperor alone, so far as possible, kept the officials, if at all, honest. When the control of the Emperor slackened, the officials became parasites and oppressors of the people.

(6) It is true that Akbar had forbidden the system of farming the revenues but it became a common practice by 1616. Akbar had also forbidden the village settlement system whereby the headmen contracted to pay a lump sum for the village as a whole, but the orders issued by Aurangzeb in 1565-66 show that the system was normally followed at that time. The share of the state in the form of land revenue was increased from one-third to one-half in order to meet the lavish expenditure in the reign of Shah Jahan but it had a very bad effect. It ruined the peasantry and paved the way for national bankruptcy. Bernier wrote in 1656 that the peasants were absconding from villages and land was falling rapidly out of cultivation. It is true that Aurangzeb ordered the flogging of the peasants if they did not cultivate their lands but that could not secure the desired

end. No force could compel the starving peasants to work hard to support the oppressive Mughal bureaucracy and tyrannical and worthless royalty.

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## CHEPTER XII

# Art & Literature in Mughal India

### Architecture

It goes without saying that the Mughals were great builders. Many of the Mughal buildings have come down to us. Fergusson was of the opinion that Mughal architecture was of foreign origin. Havell criticised this view and contended that the inspiration of the Indian master-builders was not foreign. The Mughal Emperors were more Indian than foreign and consequently there was a fusion of cultures. There were no special features of Mughal architecture. According to Sir John Marshall, the architecture of India could not conform to any one standard. There were bound to be variations on account of the vast size of the country. Moreover, a lot depended upon the personal tastes of the Mughal emperors. Persian influence predominated up to the end of the reign of Akbar and after that the Indian architecture became essentially Indian and there was nothing in it which could be specifically pointed out as Persian. The pre-Mughal architecture was known for its massiveness and simplicity and the Mughal architecture was known for its decoration and delicacy.

### Babur

Babur held a very poor opinion of Indian architecture. He had a mind to invite from Constantinople a pupil of Sinan, the famous Albanian architect, to assist him in his building projects. However, it appears that he gave up that idea. In spite of this, Babur built many buildings. To quote him, "In Agra alone, and of the stone-cutters belonging to that place only, I everyday employed on my places 680 persons; and in Agra, Sikri, Biyana, Dholpur, Gwalior and Koil there were everyday employed on my works 1,491 stone-cutters." Out of the many buildings built by Babur, only two have survived and those are the mosques in the Kabul Bagh at Panipat and the Jama Masjid at Sambhal.

### Humayun

Although Humayun led a very stormy life, he found some time to construct certain buildings. There is a mosque at Fatchabad in the Hissar District of Haryana. It is decorated with enamelled tiles in the Persian style. Humayun's palace at Delhi

called Din Panah was built in a hurry and it appears that considerations of quality and durability were completely ignored by its builders.

### Sher Shah

Sher Shah built a Mausoleum at Sahasram. There is a harmonious combination of Hindu and Muslim architectural ideas that gives the impression of a Buddhist Stupa, a Hindu temple and a Muslim tomb. According to the critics, the Mausoleum is intermediate between "the austerity of the Tughlak buildings and the feminine grace of Sher Shah's master-piece." The Mausoleum is situated on a terrace which is 30 feet high. It is about 3,000 feet square in the middle of a tank. It is "one of the best designed and most beautiful buildings in India unequalled among the earlier buildings in the Northern Provinces for grandeur and dignity...." Sher Shah also built the Purana Qila at Delhi. The mosque inside the Purana Qila called Qila-i-Kunhan Masjid is "a structure of such admirable architectural qualities as to entitle it to a high place among the buildings of Northern India."

### Akbar

Akbar took great interest in the field of architecture. His spirit of tolerance is to be found in the style of architecture of his reign. The Hindu style was favoured in his palaces at the Agra fort and at Fatehpur Sikri. The Humayun's tomb was completed in 1565. It has four towers at the four angles of the main building. It has no coloured tiles and marble has been used in its construction.

The palaces of Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri deserve special mention. Akbar laid the foundation of the new city in the honour of Salim Chisti in 1569 and many buildings were constructed during the next 12 years. The Jama Masjid and the Buland Darwaza are very famous. The Buland Darwaza is the highest gateway in India and it is one of the biggest in the world. It was constructed in 1602 to commemorate the conquest of Akbar in the Deccan. The Jama Masjid has been described as "the glory of Fatehpur". It was built in 1571. Other important buildings of Fatehpur are the House of Birbal, the Sonhala Makan or the House of the Princess of Amber, the palace of Turkish Sultana and the Diwan-i-Khas.

About Diwan-i-Khas, D'Humieres observes : "A central pillar, whose exquisite carvings recall, by a perhaps voluntary coincidence, the ornaments of the tomb of the emperor at the top of the mausoleum of Sikandarah itself, one would say, conceived in a recollection of the terraces of the Panch Mahal, where the princesses used to come to sleep, spreads into an immense circular capital. From this capital, four balconies, with low open trellis stone balustrades, diverge to the corners of the pavilion, where secondary platforms communicate with the ground by stair-cases. The emperor, like a god in the cup of a lotus-flower, sat in the centre of the corbelled capital ; a minister occupied each of the angles ; through the bays, either open or closed with screens of interlaced stone, the eye discovers the whole of the wide and almost circular horizon. The will

of the master here radiated like a glowing hearth to the four corners of the sky, shot forth to the confines of empire ; and I know no more poetic realization of a will of power and responsibility." (*Through Isle and Empire*, pp. 199-200).

About the Buland Darwaza, the same writer says : "This mass, one hundred and fifty feet high, the central arch opening up a half-dome, the four minarets at the four corners of the trapezium that forms the plan, the broad steps that lead up to the entrance, the declivity in the ground continuing the slope of the steps make of this gate a monument unequalled in its kind. Seen from below, on the edge of the village whose humble hovels are heaped up at the foot of the hill, the effect is sublime. It lies in the very disproportion between that titanic mass and its surroundings, in the proud upward leap of that stone canopy, whose minarets look like the poles that formerly, in the native steppes, carried skins of beasts or motley carpets over the conqueror in state. I know only one other monument in which the verticals reach the same pitch of magnificence, and that is Beauvais Cathedral. It is the same *Hosannah in excelsis*. For the rest, the Moslem epigraph, with so just a lyricism, exclaims :

"Its mihrab is like the broad-browed morning, its pinnacles like the Milky Way, its gate cries aloud ! .....

"A marvellous revelation, an inspired translation of the feeling that takes hold of you before that formidable arch, whence seems to issue as it were a shout of victory, continuous, louder than the trumpets of a hundred Fames, from the top of the pedestal that lifts it proudly on the horizon of Hindustan. And the great cry of pride rings out over the rich plains, the peaceful towns, the unsubdued jungle, to die away absorbed in the astonished murmur of the southern shores.

"Then one thinks of other words, those whose threefold riband forms the rich rectangle in which, according to the almost invariable rite, the arch is cut out with an august simplicity. They say :

*"The world is a bridge : pass over it, but build no house upon it. The world endures but an hour : spend it in prayer ; who sees the rest ? Thy greatest richness is the alms which thou has given. Know that the world is a mirror where fortune has appeared, then fled : call nothing thine that thy eyes cannot see."*

"And mingled with the admiration of those pure lines, of that material grandeur, of that realized miracle of art, is an element of thought, veneration and melancholy that makes up one of those rare sensations of completeness which time cannot impair in our memory and which we would buy at the cost of any exile." (*Ibid*, pp. 206-7).

According to Dr. V.A. Smith, Fatehpur Sikri was "the freak of an irresponsible autocrat acting under the impulse of overpowering superstitious emotion and enjoying the sensation of absolute freedom from financial limitations". The whole structure of the city was a "participation of a passing mood in Akbar's strange nature, begun and finished at the lightning speed while that mood lasted, inconceivable and impossible at any other time or in any other circumstances."

According to Lane-Pool, "Nothing sadder or more beautiful exists in India than the deserted city, the silent witness of a vanished dream."

Preference may be made to the Humayun's tomb at Delhi. This was constructed under the supervision of Akbar's step-mother Haji Begum. This building is Persian in style. It is the earliest example in India of "a double-dome with slightly swelling, outlines standing on a high neck—a form of construction resembling the Mausoleum of Taimur and Bibi Khanam at Samarqand."

The forts of Agra and Lahore were planned and constructed under the personal supervision of Akbar. The walls of the Agra fort are 75 feet high and possess a circumference of a mile and a half. There are two gateways called Delhi Gate or Elephant Gate and Amar Singh Gate. Within the enclosure, Akbar constructed more than 5,000 buildings of red sandstone. Many of them were destroyed by Shah Jahan. The principle of the construction of the fort of Agra and Lahore is the "beam and bracket". Every effort is made to avoid the use of arches. Jahangiri Mahal has fine ornate handiwork and carved stone brackets to support the beams. The Agra fort resembles the fort of Gwalior. "The Elephant Gateway, the Copulas of Amar Singh Gateway, the palaces arising out of the fort-walls, the planning of these palaces, and also some of the carved details all indicate that the Rajput citadel which had moved Babur to admiration some forty years before, was used freely as a model by his more fortunately placed grandsons."

The Lahore fort was built at the same time as the Agra fort, but it is more vigorous and less restrained than the Agra fort. "Elephants and lions figure in the brackets and peacocks at the friezes from which it may be inferred that Hindu craftsmanship predominated and the supervision of the Mughal overseers was of a very tolerant order." The Allahabad fort was built a little later.

Akbar also built such buildings as the fort of Attock, mosques at Merta and other places. He designed his own tomb at Sikandra. It was begun in 1605 but was completed by Jahangir. According to Abul Fazl, "His Majesty plans splendid edifices and dresses the work of his mind and heart in the garments of stone and clay." According to Fergusson, Fatehpur Sikri was a reflex of the mind of a great man.

The chief characteristics of the architecture of Akbar's period were the extensive use of red sandstone, ideal synthesis of Hindu and Muslim art traditions, construction of vastly improved domes, arches and portals, increased use of marble, incorporation of regional styles, construction of huge and impregnable forts near river banks and the placing of tombs in specially designed garden-settings and providing them with imposing and artistic gateways.

### Jahangir

Jahangir did not take so much interest in architecture as his father did. As a matter of fact, he was more interested in painting than in constructing buildings. Nur Jahan erected the famous, Itmad-ud-Daulah tomb in the memory of her father. It

is made of marble and possesses rare beauty. It is unique. It is one of the earliest buildings in which pietra dura was used. Precious stones of various colours were placed in a very delicate manner. Pietra dura work followed the Rajput pattern. It appears the old Indian architectural decoration style is the same as the many Sila Karma or precious stone in lay work.

According to Percy Brown, "Whether regarded as an architectural composition of matchless refinement, as an example of applied art displaying rare craftsmanship, or as an artistic symbol of passionate filial devotion, the tomb of Itmad-ud-Daulah expresses in every part of it the high aesthetic ideals that prevailed among the Mughals at the time."

As regards the tomb of Jahangir at Shahdara near Lahore, it was built by Nur Jahan. It is to be noted that the tombs of Jahangir, Asaf Khan and Nur Jahan were very badly injured by the Sikhs.

### Shah Jahan

Shah Jahan was one of the greatest of the builders among the Mughals. In his time, the arts of the jeweller and the painter were blended into one. The important buildings of Shah Jahan were the Diwan-i-Am and Diwan-i-Khas in the fort of Delhi, the Jama Masjid, the Moti Masjid and the Taj. It is pointed out that the palace of Delhi is the most magnificent in the East. The Diwan-i-Khas is more highly ornamented than any other building of Shah Jahan. An inscription on it described it in these words :—

"Agar firdaus bar ruyia zamin ast  
Hamin asto, hamin asto, hamin ast."

(If on earth be an Eden of bliss,  
It is this, it is this, none but this).

The mosques of Shah Jahan are of two kinds. The beauty of the Moti Masjid lies in its purity and simplicity. The perfection of proportions and harmony of constructive designs make it one of the purest and most elegant buildings of its class to be found anywhere.

Dr. Humieres says : "There is something more intense in the mystic impression of those denticulated arches, those white and bluey perspectives, than in the flight of the Gothic perpendiculars. The sense of the divine given by gigantic Tamil pagodas, the largest in the world, seems confused, extravagant, muddy, beside the fervour that shines forth from this act of faith and grace hewn in the most perfect substance wrought by the central fires. The serenity of the Greek temple has not that passion petrified in beauty. The one welcomes the divinity born of the play of the elements, the child of the clouds, the waves and the winds, blossoming from the original myth with no more pains than the flower from the bud ; the other, to which the divinity is the inconceivable, calls to it, vokes it in a poem of fervent stone. It is the same difference as between joy and rapture. Yet let it not be imagined that there is anything strained

or sorrowful in the sensation given by the Pearl Mosque. The first emotion is rather one of peace and serenity. It is only later that one begins to feel the ardour which the purified meditation of the believer would there be capable of attaining. Then, a vibration as of metal at white heat sends its waves coursing over those marbles. Next, all is peace once more ; the sanctuary is alive, a mysterious soul throbs there between bliss and ecstasy." (*Through Isle and Empire*, pp. 225-6).

The Jama Masjid is more impressive than Moti Masjid. The interior of the Jama Masjid at Delhi is simple "lest the fineness of art should disturb the people assembled to pray. The main approach of the Jama Masjid is very impressive. The Masjid is situated on a very high plinth or raised platform which gives it a commanding position in the city and compels the attention of every onlooker. Its overwhelming majesty and grandeur are emphasized by the long and massive stone stair-case leading up to the superbly proportioned gateway. The mosque has two other similar gateways, one on the northern side and the other on the southern side. Inside the mosque, certain things stand out, viz., the three perfect marble domes with black stripes, two tapering minarets and central arch leading to the main prayer hall with Quranic inscriptions. Inside the prayer hall, one does not feel over-awed by the massiveness of the building. Every bit of the building looks well-chiselled, perfectly moulded. The general effect produced is extremely soothing.

According to Percy Brown, "Augustus's boast that he found Rome of brick and left it of marble, has its counterpart in the building productions of Shah Jahan, who found the Mughal cities of sandstone and left them of marble. In the forts of Agra and Lahore, and at other places besides, this emperor swept away many of the sandstone structures of his predecessors and in their places erected marble places. The quarries of Makrana in Rajputana provided unlimited supplies of this finely textured building material, so that pavilions, courts and columned halls were all constructed in pure white marble; when for various reasons this was not made use of, the stone which took its place was faced with stucco, the plastered surfaces being polished to an egg-shell whiteness in keeping with marble masonry. Such a definite change of material naturally implied a corresponding change in architectural treatment. The building art acquired a new sensibility. Instead of the rectangular character of the previous period there arose the curved line and flowing rhythm of the style of Shah Jahan, while the chisel of the stone carver was replaced by the finer instrument of the marble-cutter and polisher. No longer was effect dependent on bold string courses and intricate carving; the chaste texture of the marble itself was sufficient to give quality to any building, and any relief decoration required to be of the most refined order and sparingly applied. Variety of surface was obtained by panels in correct proportions outlined by mouldings, fine and rare in their contours. Most of the ornamentation was, however, of a much more subtle nature, colour and gilding being introduced, while pattern inlaid in semi precious

stones—the **pietra dura** already mentioned—were a special feature. But perhaps the most striking innovation was the change in the shape of the arch, which in almost all buildings of Shah Jahan's reign is foliated or cusped in its outlines, so that white marble arcades of engrailed arches became the distinguishing characteristics of the period. During the governance of this emperor, Mughal architecture undoubtedly found its golden age. Of a highly artistic nature, he satisfied his desires by the buildings of sumptuous edifices of all kinds not waiting to complete one piece of self-expression before committing himself to another. All other forms of culture not dependent on the mason's art, such as literature, the school of miniature painting encouraged by Akbar and Jahangir, and similar intellectual pursuits were disregarded, his entire patronage being concentrated on building. And it was building of the most sensuous, even voluptuous order. The productions of his predecessors were looked upon as almost barbaric, the court chronicler comparing certain of their 'abominations' with the masterpieces of 'this august reign, when..... lovely things reached the zenith of perfection'. At Agra and Lahore, the places within the forts were largely reconstructed, and all the cities of the Mughals display examples of Shah Jahan's building predilections. In the fort at Agra, the greatest changes were recorded, the whole of the structures north of the Jahangiri Mahal being dismantled and their places taken by marble edifices such as the Diwan-i-Am, Diwan-i-Khas, the Khas Mahal, the Shish Mahal, the Musamman Burj, the Agra Bagh, the Machhi Bhawan and Moti Masjid. Details of all these alterations and additions are to be found in contemporary accounts written in the flowery language of the time. But even the most ardent flatterer, trained in poetical analogies, could barely do justice to the surpassing beauty of some of these structures, which in spite of vicissitudes still hold their own as the most elegant of their kind. What could be more graceful than the hall of the Diwan-i-Khas with its series of double columns, or the Musamman Burj hanging like a fairy bower over the grim ramparts? Even these, however, are excelled by the peerless refinement of the Moti Masjid or Pearl Mosque, one of Shah Jahan's latest additions, as it was erected in 1654, when the art had attained its ripest state. Few religious edifices convey to the beholder a finer sense of purity than this chapel royal, which both on account of the flawless quality of its material, and the skilfully modulated disposition of its elements, represents the Mughal style at its zenith. The subordination and contrast of the entrance archways to the arcading of the sanctuary, the proportions and arrangement of the kiosks surmounting the cornices, and notably, the subtle raising of the drum of the central dome in relation to those on each side, are a few only of the aspects of this structure which show in the most emphatic manner that the principles of balance and rhythm were by this time thoroughly appreciated by the Mughal builders."<sup>1</sup>

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 553-55.

## The Taj

It was built by Shah Jahan in the memory of his beloved queen, Arjumand Banu, who died in 1630. We are told that prominent artisans were invited from various countries to help in designing and constructing the Taj. The final plan of the Taj was prepared after a lot of discussion and many variations. To begin with, a model of the Taj was prepared in wood and this was followed by the artisans. The Taj was constructed under the guidance of Ustad Isa and he was paid a salary of Rs. 1,000 per month.

On the authority of Father Manrique of Spain, it is contended that the Taj was designed by Geronimo Veroneo, a Venetian. There is nothing impossible or surprising in Shah Jahan's taking the advice from a Venetian architect. However, it is strange to maintain that the Taj was designed by a foreigner. Father Manrique did not get his information directly from the Venetian. No other European writer of the Mughal period mentions the fact that the Taj was designed by a foreigner. Even Peter Mundy does not make a mention of this. The same is the case with Tavernier and Bernier. None of them maintains that the designer of the Taj was a Venetian. Thevenot, a French traveller, who visited the Taj in 1660, wrote thus: "This superb monument is sufficient to show that the Indians are not ignorant of architecture, and though the style may appear curious to Europeans, it is good taste and one could only say that it is very fine." Likewise, no contemporary Indian writer says that the Taj was designed by a foreigner. According to Abdul Hamid Lahori, "It may be observed that bands of sculptors, lapidaries, inlayers and fresco-makers came from the different parts of His Majesty's dominions. The experts of each art together with their assistants busied themselves in the task." It is pointed out that even a critical examination of the building itself shows that it is in Asiatic style. As a matter of fact, there is more of Persian influence than of European influence. Havell was of the opinion that there was nothing to support the view that the Taj was designed by a Venetian.<sup>1</sup>

It took 22 years to complete the work of construction of the Taj. There are writers who give a different duration. It was

1. According to Fergusson, "Taj Mahal at Agra is almost the only tomb that retains its grandeur in anything like its pristine beauty, and there is not perhaps in the whole world a scene where nature and art so successfully combine to produce a perfect work of art as within the precincts of the far-famed mausoleum."

The view of Fergusson was that Italian artists were brought from Florence and they were responsible for introducing the art of inlaying the marble with precious stones. The buildings of Shah Jahan have become one of the chief characteristics of architectural style. Shah Jahan employed Austrian Bordeaux as one of his chief architects. To the objection that no Indian writer has referred to the foreign artists, he gives his reply in these words, "It is hardly to be expected that natives should record the names of those who surpassed them in their own arts and needy Italian adventurers were even less likely to have an opportunity of recording the works they executed in a strange foreign country."

estimated to have cost about Rs. 3 crores. According to Abdul Hamid Lahori, "The cost of building several edifices which are detailed above, and which were completed in nearly 12 years under the supervision of Makramat Khan and Mir Abdul Karim, amounted to 50 lakhs of rupees." It may be pointed out that the inscription at the entrance of the Taj is dated 1647 A. D. This also comes to about 17 years. The period of 22 years is given by Tavernier.

We are told that Shah Jahan assigned to the Taj landed property which was expected to give an annual income of Rs. one lakh. An equal amount was to be got from the rents of the shops, inns and bazars.

According to Percy Brown, "It may be noted that while the structural portions seem to have been principally in the hands of Muhammadans, the decoration was mainly the work of Hindu craftsmen, the difficult task of preparing the *pietra dura* especially being entrusted to a group of the latter from Kanauj."<sup>1</sup> Again, "The main dome by its shape is plainly of Timurid extraction, its remote ancestor being the dome of the rock at Jerusalem: on the other hand, the copulas with their wide caves are of indigenous origin, being derived from the overlapping rings of masonry which formed the vaulted ceiling of the Hindu temple." According to Smith, the Taj is "the product of a combination of European and Asiatic genius," but this view is not accepted.

The Taj is the "finest monument of conjugal love and fidelity in the world. It is flawless in design and execution. It has been described as a lyric in stone. It is a "dream in marble." It is the "immortal tear on the cheek of eternity." Sir Edwin Arnold wrote the following regarding the Taj :

"Not architecture ; as all others are,  
But the proud passion of an Emperor's love.  
Wrought into living stone which gleams and soars  
With body of beauty shining soul and thought."

Emperor Shah Jahan himself described the Taj in these words :—

"Should guilty seek asylum here,  
Like one pardoned, he becomes free from sin.  
Should a sinner make his way to this mansion,  
All his past sins are to be washed away.  
The sight of this mansion creates sorrowing sighs  
And makes sun and moon shed tears from their eyes.  
In this world this edifice has been made  
To display thereby the Creator's glory."

Regarding the grandeur of the Taj, another writer observes thus : "Added to this, the building owes not a little of its sensuous charm to the extraneous effects of the atmosphere and the variations in the light on its marble surfaces. The marble when

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 564.

first won from the uninspiring mounds of Makrana is itself of a superb texture—white with a delicate grey grain. In the course of centuries, mellowed by the sun and sand blasted by the red-dust of the surrounding country, driven into it by the monsoon rains, it has acquired a patina, almost imperceptible but sufficient to affect its colour values. The result is that the building assumes at different times a variety of tints, from a cold grey at dawn, shimmering white at noon, and suffused with a tender blush rose in the after glow, with a wide range of half-tones in between. And in the light of the moon another and entirely changed palette is called into requisition. On some of these occasions, with the flowers in the garden, painting the foreground with their vivid colouring, it seems as if the hand of nature and the hand of man had united and done their utmost to produce a spectacle of supremely moving beauty.”

According to Fergusson, “Perhaps in the whole world, there is not a scene where nature and art so successfully combine to produce a perfect work of art as within the precincts of this far-famed mausoleum...No words can express the chastened beauty of that central chamber, seen in the soft gloom of the subdued light that reaches it through the distant and half-closed openings that surround it. Used as a **barah durrie**, or pleasure-palace, it must always have been the coolest and the loveliest of garden retreats; and now that it is sacred to the dead it is the most graceful and the most impressive of the sepulchres of the world.”<sup>1</sup>

The noteworthy features of the buildings of Shah Jahan were the extensive use of marble, sensitive and delicate floral designs on marble and red sandstone, lavish pietra dura work, more slender and graceful arches, columns and minarets, high and well-shaped domes, elegant and chaste ornamental designs, cufic inscriptions of a high order and sparing use of Hindu motifs.

After the death of Shah Jahan, Mughal architecture began to decline. Aurangzeb was not interested in architecture. He built a small mosque in the fort of Delhi for his own use. A mosque was also built at Banaras on the ruins of the temple of Vishwanath in 1660. The Badshahi Mosque was built at Lahore in 1674. However, it is a poor imitation of the Jama Masjid at Delhi. After the death of Aurangzeb, Mughal architecture completely deteriorated. The buildings that were constructed in the 18th century show the bankruptcy of taste and poverty of design, finish and decoration.

### Painting in Mughal Period

The origin, nature and development of Mughal painting is similar to Mughal architecture. It is a combination of many elements. The Chinese art which was influenced by the Buddhist Indian art, Iranian and Hellenic art and Mongolian art, was introduced into Iran in the 13th century and it continued to flourish up to the 16th century in Iran. This art was carried by

1. *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture.*

the Mughals into India from Persia. In the time of Akbar, it was completely absorbed by the Indian art. It is to be noted that the Indian painters differed in certain respects from the Western or Persian painters. The Hindu painters took their subjects and inspiration from the Indian classics, Vaishnava literature and the life of the people. The Persian or Western painters took their subjects and inspiration from the materialistic life of the court.

The Afghan rulers of India did not give any encouragement to painting. As a matter of fact, Firoz Tughlak prohibited the painting of portraits and wall decorations in his own palace. However, painting received great encouragement in the time of the Mughals. Even the ancestors of the Mughals were great lovers of painting and no wonder Babur inherited an artistic taste. Babur was a great lover of beauty and art. He found great pleasure in flowers, springs and streams. He employed court painters and the paintings in the Alwar manuscript of the Persian version of Babur's Memoirs may represent the kind of work they produced.

Humayun developed a taste for painting when he was in exile in Persia. When he went back to Kabul, he invited in 1550 Mir Sayyid Ali and Khawaja Abdus Samad. These two painters gave lessons to Humayun and were asked to illustrate the *Dastan-i-Amir Hamzah*. The early death of Humayun did not allow great works of painting to be completed.

### **Akbar**

In the time of Akbar, painting made very great progress. The Emperor created a separate department of Painting and placed the same under the control of Khawaja Abdus Samad. He took personal interest in the department and gave every kind of encouragement. This led to the growth of his school of painting which may be called the National Indian School of Painting. The painters were called from every part of India and even from outside. Although they belonged to different religions and castes, they had the common ideal of producing works of great calling. We are told that Akbar had an album of portraits. It is possible that Umar Shaik's portrait of Babur was in this album.

**Abdus Samad** was a native of Shiraz in Persia. He was given the title of Shirin-Kalam or "Sweet-pen." Akbar appointed Abdus Samad as the Master of the Mint at the capital. Later on, he was sent to Multan as Diwan or Revenue Commissioner. Although he was officially a Mansabdar of 400, he enjoyed considerable influence at the court. He was so skilful that he is stated to have written on a poppy-seed Chapter 112 of the Koran. It runs thus :—

"In the name of the most merciful God. Say, God is our God ; the eternal God : he begotteth not, neither is he begotten : and there is not any one like unto him."

Regarding the interest of Akbar in painting, Abul Fazl remarks thus in the *Ain-i-Akbari*: "He gives it every encouragement, as he looks upon it as means both of study and amusement. Hence the art flourishes and many painters have obtained great reputation. The works of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty by the Daroghas and the clerk; he often confers rewards according to excellence of workmanship or increases the monthly salaries. Much progress was made in the commodities required by painters, and the correct prices of such articles were carefully ascertained. The mixture of colours has specially been improved. The pictures thus received a hitherto unknown finish. Most excellent painters are now to be found, and the masterpieces worthy of a Bihiszad may be placed at the side of the wonder-works of the European painters who have attained world-wide fame. The minuteness in detail, the general finish, the boldness of execution, etc., now observed in pictures are incomparable, even inanimate objects look as if they had life. More than a hundred painters have become famous masters of the art, while the number of those who reached perfection, or those who are middling is very large. This is especially true of the Hindus; their pictures surpass our conception of things. Few indeed in the whole world are found equal to them."

Abul Fazl tells us that Akbar himself attached great importance to painting and gives the following reasons for the same: "It appears to me (Akbar), as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognising God, for a painter in sketching anything that has life, and in devising the limbs one after another, must come to feel that he cannot bestow personality on his works, and is thus forced to think of God, the giver of life and thus increase knowledge."

The number of foreign painters at the court of Akbar was not very large and the majority of them were Hindus. The leading Muslim painters were Abdus Samad, Mir Saiyyad Ali and Farukh Beg. Among the Hindu painters were Daswant, Basawan, Sanwal Das, Tara Chand, Jagannath and others. As regards **Basawan**, he was an expert in painting of backgrounds, drawing of features and distribution of colours. As regards **Daswant**, he belonged to a low caste but gave signs of greatness as a painter from his very childhood. He attracted the attention of Akbar who put him under the care of Abdus Samad. Unfortunately, when he was at the height of his glory, he became insane and committed suicide.

In the time of Akbar, the Chingiznamah, the Ramayana, Kalyadaman, Ayardanish, Zafarnamah, Naldaman and Razmanamah were illustrated.

### Jahangir

Like his father, Jahangir gave an impetus to the art of painting. He himself was a rich collector, a connoisseur and an art critic. Jahangir boasts of his own knowledge of painting in these

words : "As regards myself, my liking for painting and my practice in judging it have arrived at such a point that when any work is brought to me, either of the deceased artists, or those of the present day, without the names being told me. I say on the spur of the moment that it is the work of such and such man. And if there be a picture containing many portraits, and each face be the work of a different master, I can discover which face is the work of each of them. If any other person has put in the eye-brows of a face, I can perceive whose work the original face is and who has painted the eyes and eye-brows."

Sir Thomas Roe who visited the Mughal court in the time of Jahangir testifies to the fact that Jahangir was a great lover of painting. The great painters of Jahangir's time were Farruk Beg, Mohammad Nadir and Mohammad Murad. Aqa Riza was given the title of Nadir-uz-Zaman by Jahangir. Ustad Mansur had the title of Nadir-ul-Asar. It is true that the Hindu painters were not favoured by Jahangir, but Bishan Das, the Keshva brothers, Manohar, Madhav and Tulsi flourished at this time. It is stated that **Bishan Das** was unequalled in his age for taking likeness. The favourite subjects of painting were buildings, flowers, animals, birds and natural objects. The art of painting became essentially Indian in the time of Jahangir. The Mughal School of Miniature Painting reached its climax in the time of Jahangir. Akbar laid the foundation of the Mughal miniature painting, but it was his son Jahangir born of a Rajput princess who by his knowledge and artistic intuition guided the new School of Indian Art to maturity and taught it by the influence of his own rare judgment to achieve success."

There were certain characteristic features of the paintings of Jahangir's reign. There was the predominance of realism. Most of the subjects, including natural themes and objects like flowers, trees, hills, birds, beasts, clouds etc., were drawn from real life. The portrayal of nature was extremely realistic. There was also the depiction of real human-beings rather than imaginary figures in the portrait studies of the time. The portrait painters of Jahangir's time were not only keen observers of human features, but had a sharp eye for different moods and expressions. Their capacity for immense patience and concentration is evident from every portrait of that period. Very rarely, the royal ladies were the subjects of portraits. It is very doubtful whether the paintings of the royal ladies which actually exist, are really genuine because there was strict Purdah in those days. There was also the absence of references to scenes from the life of Prophet Muhammad and his companions for fear of wounding the religious feelings of the Muslims. There was also the comparative isolation of the painters from the lives of ordinary people and they hesitated to depict the beauty of the human form. There was also the inability of painters capable of delineating expressions and emotions to capture life and motion with their brushes. There was a careful choice and tasteful employment of the paints and pigments used in the paintings. The pigments most commonly

used were golden, blue, green, red and silvery white. There was also the mounting of pictures and their embellishment with an artistic foliated border.

According to Percy Brown, "With his (Jahangir) passing, the soul of Mughal painting also departed: its outward form remained for a time, in gold and lavish vestments, it lived on under other kings but its real spirit died with Jahangir."<sup>1</sup>

### Shah Jahan

As regards Shah Jahan, he took more interest in architecture and consequently painting did not get any encouragement. The result was that not much progress was made in the field of painting in his reign. A few nobles patronised the painters and Asaf Khan was one of them. His house at Lahore was one of the finest mansions in the country and it was decorated by the painters. Dara Shikoh was a lover of painting and tried to patronise the same but his abrupt end gave a setback to painting. An album of Dara is to be found in the library of the India office. The famous painters of the time of Shah Jahan were Mir Hassan, Anupa Chitra and Chitramani.

In the time of Aurangzeb also, the painters did not get any encouragement. However, this does not mean that the art of painting disappeared altogether. The painters continued their work either under the patronage of the nobles or of their own account. Aurangzeb himself is said to have defaced the paintings in Sur Mahal at Bijapur. He is also stated to have white-washed the paintings in Akbar's Mausoleum at Sikandara. Many pictures have come down to us which show Aurangzeb taking part in certain battles. After the decline and fall of the Mughals, painters migrated to Lucknow, Patna, Murshidabad, Mysore and Hyderabad. However, their works were not of a very high order.

According to Percy Brown, "The Mughal School of Painting in India coincides with the period of Mughal dynasty. Coming into patronage during the reign of Akbar in the later half of the sixteenth century, it attained its apogee under the imperial dilettante Jahangir. The reign of his successor Shah Jahan marks the first step in its decline, while under the unsympathetic rule of Aurangzeb its death-knell was rung. It lingered on as a decadent art under the Nawabs of Oudh until the end of eighteenth century and practically ceased to exist with the advent of British rule. As a School of Painting, its duration was short extending even two and a half centuries and it has been aptly referred to as not exactly a school, but more of a brilliant episode in the history of Indian art."<sup>2</sup> Again, "Inspired by the founders of the dynasty, it reflected in its subject-matter and in its invention the mind of the ruling power.....The Mughal School confines itself to portraying somewhat the materialistic life of the court with its state-func-

1. *Mughal Painting*, p. 86.

2. *Mughal Painting*, p. 86.

tions, processions, hunting expeditions, and all the picturesque although barbaric pageantry of an affluent oriental dynasty". The style and subject of Mughal art is "materialistic, exotic and eclectic" and that of the Hindu art is "spiritual and symbolic". The Mughal School had no immediate contact with the masses. It was not meant for the common people. Only the ruling chiefs and princes were its patrons and connoisseurs. Outside the courts, little was known of its existence.

The Deccan School of Painting was an off-shoot of Mughal painting. It was introduced into the Deccan after the conquests of Aurangzeb. There is a controversy whether the Deccani school produced any work of great merit or not. On account of the chaotic condition of the country, the atmosphere was not congenial for the development of arts. Probably, the so-called works of the Deccani schools were stolen or looted from the Mughal court by the Pe-shwas. Their technique, style and form are similar to those of Mughal paintings.

The Rajput School of Paintings developed under the patronage of Hindu chiefs. The Rajput art is the art of the people. It is democratic and majestic in form. The Hindu artists depicted the life of the common people, their beliefs, manners and traditions. The Pahari artists from Nurpur, Basohli, Chamba and Jammu painted pictures from the Indian classics. Romance, love and devotion were symbolised in the visualisation of popular divinities like Shankar, Parvati and Radha-Krishna. Myths and legends were represented by giving them human and super-human forms. Rajput artists excelled in miniature paintings. Their paintings of women were charming and graceful. The chief features of Rajput paintings were "delicacy of line, brilliancy of colour and minuteness of decorative detail."

## Music

The Mughals were patrons of music. According to Lane-Poole, the art of improvising quatrain on the spot, quoting Persian classics, writing a good hand and singing a good song were appreciated in the time of Babur who himself was fond of music. He not only liked music but himself wrote poetry. Humayun was also fond of musicians and singers and had fixed Mondays and Wednesdays for that purpose. It is stated that when Humayun captured Mandu in 1535 and ordered a wholesale massacre of all the prisoners, he came to know that **achchu**, a musician, was among the captives. Not only his life was saved, he was also made a musician of the court. As regards the members of the Sur dynasty, Badauni says that they "were enticed from the path of fortitude and self-restraint by all sorts of sense-ravishing allurements." Adil Shah was so great a patron of music that he gave Bhagat, a musician boy, Mansab of 10,000.

Akbar was also a great lover of music. According to Abul Fazl, "His Majesty pays much attention to music and is the patron of all who practise this enchanting art. There are numerous musicians at the court, Hindu, Iranis, Turanis, Kashmiris, both

men and women. The court musicians are arranged in seven divisions, one for each day of the week." Abul Fazl gives us a list of 36 singers and performers on various instruments. The name of Baz Bahadur, the ex-king of Malwa, is one of them. It is stated that he was appointed a Mansabdar of 1,000 and he is described as a singer without rival.

According to Abul Fazal, Akbar was the master of "such knowledge of the science of music as trained musicians do not possess; and he had likewise an excellent hand at performing especially on the **Nakarah** (kettle-drum)." Akbar made a special study of Hindi vocalization under Lal Kalawant or Miyan Lal who taught him "every breathing and sign that appertains to the Hindi language." The **Ain-i-Akbari** contains details of the daily routine of performances by the palace band.

Mian **Tansen** was the best singer of Akbar's time. According to Abul Fazl, "A singer like him has not been in India for the last thousand years." Tansen was an intimate friend of Surdas. He got his musical education at Gwalior where Raja Man Singh had founded a school of music. Unfortunately, he took to excessive drinking. He died at the age of 34 in 1589. Tansen is stated to have invented some new Ragas. It is maintained by some critics that Tansen "falsified the Ragas of which two, Hindol and Megh, have disappeared completely since his day." The other famous musicians were Baba Ram Das, Bauja Bawra and Sur Das. Baba Ram Das was second only to Tansen. A reward of one lakh of Tankas was given to him by Bairam Khan. In the time of Akbar, the different systems of music were fused together and a new Indian music came into being.

Like his father, Jahangir had an ear for music. He kept in his court a large number of musicians. According to William Finch, "Many hundred of musicians and dancing girls attended there day and night, yet as their several turns—every seventh day, that they may be ready when the King or his women shall please to call any of them to sing or dance in his Mahal, he was giving to every one of them stipend according to their worth." Jahangir was himself the author of many Hindi songs which were very interesting. Mohammad Salih and his brothers were great singers of Hindi songs. Jagannath and Janardhan Bhatt of Bikaner were great musicians.

Shah Jahan was also a lover of music. In the evenings, he used to hear the best of the songs of the musicians. Vocal and instrumental music was given every day in the Diwan-i-Khas. On occasions, Shah Jahan himself took part in music. According to J. N. Sarkar, the voice of Shah Jahan was so attractive that "many pure-souled Sufis and holy men with hearts withdrawn from the world who attended these evening assemblies lost their senses in the ecstasy produced by his singing." Shah Jahan patronised musicians. Ram Das and Maha Patra were chief vocalists at the court of Shah Jahan. On one occasion, Shah Jahan was so much pleased with the music of Jagannath that he had him weighed against gold and gave him the amount as his fee.

It is pointed out that during the first ten years of his reign, Aurangzeb was fond of music. He maintained a large number of singers at his court. According to Saqi Mustad Khan, "Sweet voiced singers and charming players on musical instruments were gathered in numbers around his throne, and in the first few years of his reign he occasionally listened to their music." However, as Aurangzeb began to grow, he became an opponent of music and no wonder turned out the court musicians. Of course, the people were allowed to sing privately. As the court musicians were hit by the orders of the Emperor, they organised a funeral procession on a Friday when Aurangzeb was to go to the mosque for prayers. When Aurangzeb heard of their weeping, he enquired of the reason. He was informed that as the orders of the Emperor had killed music, they were taking her to the grave. The reply of Aurangzeb was that "they should pray for the soul of music and see that she was thoroughly buried." However, in spite of the orders of the Emperor, music continued to flourish as the members of the royal family, the nobility and the courtiers were not prepared to go without it.

### Growth of literature under the Mughals

The Mughal period was productive of great literature. The literature was in Persian and Hindi. As regards **Persian literature**, Babur himself was a great scholar and knew thoroughly Arabic, Persian and Turki. He not only liked the writings of others, but himself contributed to the same. He wrote his Memoirs in the Turkish language. There is no hypocrisy in his writings. He took delight in the company of learned men and held discussions with them.

Babur has been described as "the Prince of Autobiographers." According to Elphinstone, Babur's Memoirs were "almost the only piece of real history in Asia." According to Beveridge, "It is one of these priceless records which are for all time." According to Lane-Poole, "If ever there was a case when the testimony of a single historical document, unsupported by any other evidence should be accepted as sufficient proof, it is the case with Babur's Memoirs."

Humayun collected a large number of poets, philosophers and divines and took delight in their company. He was so much fond of books that wherever he went, he took a library of books with him. Jauhar, the author of **Tazkirat-ul-Waqiat**, was a servant of Humayun.

Persian literature made great headway in the time of Akbar. Some of the writings of this period have historical importance and the others literary importance. The important historical works of this period were **Tarikh-i-Alfi** of Mulla Daud, the **Ain-i-Akbari** and **Akbarnamah** of Abul Fazl, the **Masir-i-Rahimi** of Abdul Baqi, the **Tabaqat-i-Akbari** of Nizam-ud-Din Ahmed, the **Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh** of Badauni and **Akbarnamah** of Faizi.

Abul Fazl was undoubtedly the ablest writer in Persian. Whatever the criticism of his literary style, he was absolutely free from impurity. Smith's view was that Abul Fazl's style was intolerable to him. "Simple facts are wrapped in cloud of almost meaningless rhetoric, and an indelible impression is produced on the mind of the reader that the author lacked sincerity. Nevertheless Blochmann trusted the judgment of the author of *Maasirul Umara* that 'as a writer Abul Fazl stands unrivalled. His style is grand and free from the technicalities and flimsy prettinesses of other Munshis (Secretaries), and the force of his words, the structure of his sentences, the stableness of his compounds, and the elegance of his periods are such that it would be difficult for any one to imitate them.' Few Europeans can hardly agree with that criticism."

According to J. N. Sarkar, "He (Abul Fazl) is an insufferable rhetorician and even when he intends to tell a fact, he buries it under a mass of figures of speech and round-about expression. His work therefore does not give us as much help in drawing a detailed picture of the administrative machinery though in statistical portion, it is detailed and correct. We are oppressed by a sense of vagueness and unreality of the picture as we go through the descriptive parts of the *Ain*." According to Beveridge, the style of Abul Fazl was tortuous and obscure.

The prose of Abul Fazal was vigorous and elegant. It seems to be inflated in verbose to western writers. He uses rare similes and metaphors with great ease and skill. The use of rhetoric sometimes creates confusion. It is stated that Abdullah Uzbeg used to say that "I am not so afraid of the sword of Akbar as I am of the pen of Abul Fazl." The *Akbarnamah* and the *Ain-i-Akbari* are the two monuments of Abul Fazl's fame as a writer and a historian.

The *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* of Badauni is the work of a critic of Akbar. The author's name was Abdul Qadir but he was known as Badauni as he was a native of Badaun in Rohilkhand. He was a Sunni Muslim and he wrote his book from that point of view. Dr. Smith has attached great importance to this work as being a "check on the turgid panegyric composed by the latitudinarians." The book gives us a lot of information regarding various aspects of Akbar's policy and administration. According to Blochmann, "It is much prized as written by an enemy of Akbar whose character in its grandness and in its failings is much more prominent than in *Akbarnamah* or *Ain-i-Akbari* or *Masir-i-Rahimi*."

The *Tabakat-i-Akbari* or the Annals of Akbar was written by Nizam-ud-Din. He has a highly-placed official in the regime of Akbar. He has given lengthy accounts of the conquests of Akbar. According to Dr. Smith, "The book is dry, colourless, chronicle of external events. It completely ignores Akbar's religious vagaries and seldom or never attempts to offer reflections or criticisms of the events and actions recorded."

A large number of books were translated into Persian in the time of Akbar. Badauni translated the **Ramayana** of Balmiki into Persian. A portion of the **Mahabharata** was also translated. Ibrahim Sarhandi translated the **Atharva Veda**. Faizi translated into Persian **Lilavati**, a work on Arithmetic.

Ghizali was a great prose-writer. He left his native land in Persia on account of his persecution and was sent to the Deccan. From the Deccan, he went to Jaunpur and ultimately joined the Mughal service. He created such an impression that he was made the Poet-Laureate and he continued to be so till 1572. He was a Sufi by conviction. He was liberal in his ideas. He wrote the **Israr-i-Maktub**, **Mirati-ul-Kainat** and **Nashi Badid**.

Faizi, the son of Mubarak and brother of Abul Fazl, was also appointed Poet-Laureate. His important books were **Markazi Adwar**, **Sawati-ul-Ilham**, **Masnavi Nala-o-Daman** and **Mawarid-ul-Kala** and **Akbarnamah**. Faizi was both a poet and prose-writer. His style was chaste and pure. He expressed in noblest sentences the best language.

In the time of Akbar, Mohammad Hussain Nazari wrote **Ghazals**. Saiyyid Jamal-ud-din Urfi of Shiraz wrote **Quasidas**. His **Quasidas** were the best.

Jahangir himself was a great scholar and writer. His own book, called **Tuzk-i-Jahangiri**, is a work of great literary merit and historical importance. There is freshness, frankness and sincerity in this autobiography. According to Elliot and Dawson, "Taken as a whole, the work is very interesting and assuming that Jahangir is mainly responsible for its authorship, it proves him to have been a man of no common ability. He records his weaknesses and confesses his faults (like Babur) with candour and a perusal of this work would leave a favourable impression both of his character and talents." The great writers of Jahangir's reign were Mirza Ghyas Beg, Naqib Khan, Mutmad Khan, Niamat Ullah and Abdul Haq Dehlvi. The important writings of his period were **Masiri Jahangiri**, **Iqbalnamah-i-Jahangiri** and the **Zubd-ut-Tawarikh**.

As regards Shah Jahan, he patronised writers like Abdul Hamid Lahori, Amin Qazwini, Inayat Khan and Mohammad Salih. Abdul Hamid wrote the famous **Padshahnamah**, Amin Qazwini wrote a book with a similar title. Mohammad Salih wrote **Amal Saligh**. **Shahjahannamah** was written by Inayat Khan. Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan, was a great scholar. It was under his patronage that books like the **Upnishads**, the **Gita** and the **Yoga Vashist** were translated into Persian.

The **Fatwa-i-Alamgiri** was compiled under the patronage of Aurangzeb. He did not like the writing of the history of his reign and no wonder Khafi Khan or Mohammad Hashim wrote **Muntakhan-ul-Lubab** in secret. The other important writings of this period were **Alamgirnamah**, **Masiri-Alamgiri**, **Ruqqat-i-Alamgiri** and **Khulasat ul-Tawarikh**.

It is to be noted that Gulbadan Begum, daughter of Babur, wrote the **Humayun Namah** and Zebunnissa, daughter of Aurangzeb, wrote the **Diwan-i-Makhfi**.

### Hindi literature

In the Mughal period, many writers contributed towards the growth of Hindi literature. Reference may be made to the works of Kabir in this connection. He wrote **Dohas** and **Sakhis** which are popular even today. They contain in a short space all the wisdom of the world.

Malik Mohammad Jayasi was the author of **Padmavat**. This book relates the story of Padmani, the queen of Mewar.

The policy of toleration of Akbar helped the growth of Hindi literature in his time. Important personalities like Mirza Abdur Rahim, Khan-i-Khanan, Bhagwan Das and Man Singh wrote poetry in Hindi. Birbal got the title of Kavi Raya from Akbar. Abdur Rahim was not only a poet himself but he patronised other poets as well. His famous book is **Rahim Satsai** which is a collection of Dohas. Karan and Narhari Sahai were the court poets of Akbar. Narhari Sahai was given the title of Maha Patra. **Tulsi Das** (1532—1623) was a contemporary of Akbar. He was the son of ordinary Brahmin parents. As he was born in an unlucky hour, he was not cared for. The child was picked up by a wandering mendicant who gave him sustenance and instruction in the life of Rama. The young child wandered from place to place with his adoptive parent. Most of the latter part of his life was spent at Banaras. His literary career after the age of 40 continued for another 40 years. The principal composition of Tulsi Das on which his fame depends, is called **Ramcharitmanas** or 'Lake of the deeds of Rama.' It is a very large work. Its subject is the story of Rama who is regarded as a God manifested in the flesh and entitled to great reverence. The theology is so much similar to that of Christianity that many passages may be applied to Christianity by merely substituting the name of Jesus for Rama. According to Dr. Smith, 'The morality of the poem is as lofty as the theology and there is not an impure word or idea in it from beginning to end. Rama's wife Sita is depicted as the ideal of womanhood. The poem is, to the Hindus of Northern India, even more than the Bible to ordinary British Christian 'In its own country it is supreme above all other literature and exercises an influence which it would be difficult to exaggerate.' That influence is all for good. The religion taught is that of the love of God—a personal God who loves and cares for his children and makes himself understood through his incarnation, Rama, the saviour.

"The poem is written in archaic Hindi, the vernacular of Ajodhya and surrounding districts in the 16th century, recorded phonetically. It is consequently difficult for European students, and very few people of European birth are able to read it in the original with ease. Sir George Grierson, one of the few, is firmly convinced that the poem is 'the work of a great genius'. He admits that 'as a

work of art it has to European readers its prolixities and episodes which grate against occidental tastes'; but notwithstanding, he holds to the opinion that the poem is a masterpiece. He points out the style varies with the subjects, some passages being filled with 'infinite pathos', while others are expressed in the form of sententious aphorisms, so much favoured by Hindu authors. The characters, each of which has a well-defined personality, 'live and move with all the dignity of a heroic age.' The opinion of other competent experts coincides with that of Grierson and although my acquaintance with the original is extremely slight, I may say that I concur cordially."

Sir George Grierson pays the following tribute to Tulsi Das ; "One of the greatest reformers and one of the greatest poets that India has produced—to the present writer, he is in both characters, the greatest—he disdained to found a church, and contented himself with telling his fellow countrymen how to work out each his own salvation amongst his own kith and kin." Again, "Pandits may talk of **Vedas** and **Upanishadas**, and a few may even study them ; others may say they find their faith in the **Puranas** but to the vast majority of the people of Hindustan, learned and unlearned alike, their sole norm of conduct is the so-called **Tulsi-krita Ramayana**."

Another important writer in Hindi was Sur Das, the blind bard of Agra. The name of Sur Das is included in Abul Fazl's list of 36 singers and musicians employed at the court of Akbar. Sur Das excelled in all styles. His famous book is known as "Sur Sagar." Sur has given a description of the sports of Lord Krishna in his childhood and also the beauty of Lord Krishna and his beloved Radha. He wrote in Brij Bhasa and employed imagery. The following couplet points out the greatness of Sur Das :

"Sur is the Sun, Tulsi the moon,  
Keshva is a cluster of stars,  
But the poets of modern age are alike roaring glow-worms  
giving light here and there."

During this period, Nand Das wrote the **Raspanchadhyayi**, Vithal Nath, the **Chaurasi Vaishnava Ki Varta** Khumbhan Das was another great writer. He was a man of great renunciation. Once he was invited to Fatehpur Sikri by Akbar but he replied in these words : "What have the saints got to do in Sikri ? In going and returning shoes were torn out and the name of Hari was forgotten. Greetings had to be offered to those the sight of whose faces causes pain. Khumbhan Das says without Girdhar all else is useless."

Another famous Hindi writer was **Ras Khan**, a Muslim disciple of Lord Krishna. He wrote his famous book called '**Prem Vatikā**' about 1614. He wrote his **Savayias** and **Kabittas** in a very attractive style. Nabhaji wrote the famous book called **Bhaktmal**. This book refers to the important devotees and saints who were the followers of Lord Krishna and Rama. Keshav Das wrote **Kavi**

**Priya, Ram Chandrika. Rasik Priya and Alankrit Manjari.** It is to be noted that the poetry of Keshav is not easy to understand. He died about 1617 A.D.

**Sundra**, a Brahmin of Gwalior, wrote in 1631 the "**Sundra Shringar**". He also wrote the **Simhasan Battisi** in Braja language. He was given the title of Kviraya and Mahakaviraya by Shah Jahan. Senapati was also a follower of Lord Krishna and he wrote the **Kabitta Ratnakar**. Another famous writer was **Bhushan** who was patronised by Shivaji and Chhatrasal Bundela. Bhushan was essentially a Hindu poet and his main purpose was to glorify Hinduism and create among the Hindus a spirit of bravery and fearlessness. He wrote the **Shivaraja Bhushana**, **Chhatrasaldashaka** and **Shivavati**. Matiram Tripathi's writings are famous for their similes. Bihari Lal Chaube wrote the famous "**Bihari Satsai**". He was patronised by Raja Jai Singh who gave him one gold Ashrafi for one Doha. The Dohas and Sorthas of Behari are the "daintiest pieces of art in any Indian language."

It is to be noted that Hindi literature began to decline from the time of Aurangzeb. The era of great poets ended. The other writings were not of very high merit. The Urdu literature made some progress in the states of Golconda and Bijapur. Wali was a great poet and he wrote Ghazals, Rubaiyats and Masnavis in a very simple and natural style. When he visited Delhi, he attracted great attention. The other important Urdu writers were Hatim, Abru, Mazhar and Khan Arzu.

### SUGGESTED READINGS

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|-----------------------|--|
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## CHAPTER XIII

# Social and Economic Condition in Mughal India

It is difficult to write about the social and economic conditions of Mughal India as the material on the subject is scanty. Contemporary writers, particularly Mohammadan historians, tell us practically nothing of the man in the street and his ways of living. V. A. Smith rightly points out that the Mohammadan writers confine their record to "a chronicle of kings, courts and conquests, rather than one of national and social evolution." From one point of view, the history of the Mughal Empire can be regarded as little more than the history of the rulers of the three towns of Lahore, Delhi and Agra. It is rightly pointed out that there was not much to write about the life of the people of the villages as the same was hopelessly dull and monotonous.

### **King**

Society in Mughal times was organised on a feudal basis and the head of the social system was the king. He enjoyed an unparalleled status. He was the ultimate authority in everything. Wasteful expenditure was common. The king did everything in his power for his kiths and kins. They were given allowances and stipends from the royal exchequer. Every one tried to win over the goodwill of the king as success in life depended upon his goodwill. The king was the fountain of honours and favours. The Mughal rulers were notorious for their large harems. It is stated that Akbar maintained as many as 5,000 wives. There was a separate staff of women officers to look after them. A big kitchen was run by the king. Feasts and festivities were common. Pleasures, amusements and recreations were a big drain on the time of the king. There are references to musical concerts, dancing, Jashans and elephant-fights. Hunting was also in fashion but in course of time it became very expensive.

### **Nobles**

The Mughal nobles monopolised most of the jobs in the country. They enjoyed the goodwill and patronage of the king. They demanded and commanded great honour and dignity in society. No wonder, every talented person in contemporary society aspired to become a nobleman one day.

Most of the nobles lived a life of extravagance. They maintained large establishments and most of their income was wasted on them. They were required to give costly presents to the king on various occasions. They were fond of foreign goods which were a very big drain on their resources. Drinking was very common among them. They wasted their fortunes in drinking and many of them died of excessive drinking. This vice they shared with the Mughal emperors. With the exception of Aurangzeb, all the Mughal emperors drank a lot. The nobles also followed the example of the king and maintained a large number of mistresses and dancing girls. They were fond of sumptuous dinners and dainty dishes. Sir Thomas Roe has given us a beautiful description of the dinner given by Asaf Khan, brother of Nur Jahan, to him. The number of dishes was not 10, 20 or 30 but much more. The use of meat was common but cow was also respected. It is stated in the *Ain-i-Akbari* that cow was held in high esteem because "by means of this animal tillage is carried on, the sustenance of life rendered possible and the table of the inhabitants is filled with milk and butter." Fresh fruits were brought from Bukhara and Samaraqand. The use of ice was a luxury.

The nobles were generally corrupt. They felt no hesitation in giving and taking bribes which ultimately ruined them. A reference is made to the law of escheat by the foreign travellers who visited India during the Mughal period. It is stated that when a nobleman died, all his property was taken over by the king. It is pointed out that this had a salutary effect on the nobles as they would hesitate to collect money by fair or foul means as the same was sure to be taken away by the king after their death. However, this law had also an unhappy effect. It encouraged extravagance. As the nobles knew that everything after their death would go to the king, they never cared to save. No nobleman was allowed to take away his riches outside India.

About the nobility, Dr. Satish Chandra says : "The nobility of the Mughals, although it suffered from a number of internal weaknesses, was on a broad view, a remarkable institution which welded into a homogeneous and harmonious whole men belonging to different regions and tribes, speaking different languages and professing different religions, and with differing cultural traditions. The Mughals succeeded in imbuing the nobles with a sense of common purpose and loyalty to the reigning dynasty, and in imparting to them a distinctive cultural outlook, and in creating traditions of high efficiency and endeavour in administration. It was, thus, a definite factor in securing for a century and a half a remarkable degree of unity and good government in the country.

"During the later part of the seventeenth and in the early part of the eighteenth century, stresses were placed on the nobility which, combined with its internal weaknesses, led to growing factionalism in the nobility and disrupted the empire." (**Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court 1707-1740**, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv).

### **Middle Class**

The middle class was heterogeneous in composition. It in-

cluded the wealthy merchants, professional men and petty Mansabdars. It is stated that the merchants usually concealed their wealth as there was always the danger of the same being forcibly taken away by the local governor or Faujdar. Terry tells us that it was not safe for them to appear rich because there was a very likelihood of their being used as filled sponges. Bernier also says that the commercial classes lived in a state of "studied indigence". However, this did not apply to the merchants on the west coast. The latter did business on a large scale and enjoyed their riches without fear of losing them. They maintained a high standard of living. European travellers tell us that they made a greater use of luxuries. Usury was very common.

The petty Mansabdars tried to copy the big Mansabdars in their extravagance and pomp and show. They did not hesitate to borrow to maintain outward show. In order to maintain their position, they resorted to all kinds of malpractices such as bribery and extortion. The petty Mansabdars did not play any significant part in society.

### Lower Class

The lower classes comprised of the cultivators, artisans, small traders, shop-keepers, household servants, slaves etc. Most of them were condemned to live a hard and unattractive life. Their clothings were scanty. They did not use woollen clothes at all. Very few of them could afford to use shoes. Their lives were simple and their belongings were limited. Financially, the petty shop-keepers were better off. The servants attached to the officers were arrogant in their dealings with the public on account of the backing of their masters. They demanded tips as a right. The lives of the artisans were hard. They had to work in different villages to maintain themselves as there was not enough of work in one village.

There was no scarcity of food except in times of famine. Consequently, there was practically no starvation in normal circumstances. The condition of the peasants in the time of Akbar was not bad. The share of the state demand was fixed. The officers and the Government also took into consideration their welfare. However, things became bad when the officials became corrupt later on.

Sati was common among the Hindus. Child marriage was also prevalent. Both the Hindus and Muslims spent a lot of money on ornaments. The use of liquor, opium, etc., was common and no effective check was put on them. There was no scheme of popular education for the people.

The Hindus believed in the purity of the water of the Ganges. They believed that a dip in the Ganges was sure to purify them of all their sins. No wonder, they covered long distances to have a dip in the Ganges. Pilgrimages were popular among the Hindus in spite of the difficulties of the means of communication and transport in Mughal India. Up to the reign of Akbar, it was customary for the Muslim rulers to levy a tax on pilgrims and that brought a lot of revenue. However, the pilgrim tax was abolished by Akbar in 1563

throughout his dominion as it was considered by him to be contrary to the Divine will to levy dues from people assembled to worship the Creator. Abul Fazl tells us that the abolition of the pilgrim tax resulted in a loss of millions of rupees to the royal exchequer. There may be some exaggeration in this statement, but it proves the fact that the number of the pilgrims among the Hindus must have been very large. It is true that the Jizya was reimposed by Aurangzeb, but he does not seem to have re-imposed the pilgrim tax. However, there is reason to believe that the number of the pilgrims must have fallen on account of the anti-Hindu policy followed by Aurangzeb.

The pilgrimage to Mecca was an annual event of great importance in Mughal India. As early as the 15th century, Nicolo Conti and other travellers noticed very large Indian built vessels on the west coast which were maintained solely for Haj purposes. There were about 6 of them in existence. They started annually from Surat and other ports on the Gulf of Cambay. The number of the pilgrims was very large. Captain Saris wrote in 1612 that the ship that usually went from Surat to Mecca was unusually very big, and carried as many as 1,700 pilgrims who went to Mecca not for profits but out of devotion to visit Mecca and Medina. It is stated that during the early years of his reign, Akbar showed considerable interest in the pilgrimage to Mecca and was prepared to give all kinds of assistance to the pilgrims. In 1575, he issued a general order that any one who wished to go on Haj pilgrimage would be paid from the royal treasury. As a matter of fact, a large number of Muslims availed of this opportunity. Akbar also started the system of pilgrim-caravans in charge of a leader, supplied with money for the expenses of the whole party. He appointed Sultan Khwaja to be Mir Haji or pilgrim leader. In 1576, he himself was anxious to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca but he was not allowed to do so by his ministers. However, he availed of the opportunity of the departure of the caravan and put on the dress of a pilgrim and walked some paces with Sultan Khawaja as the latter set forth on his long march to the coast. Akbar occasionally made use of the pilgrimage to get rid of the ministers or nobles, who were considered to be undesirable for any reason. In 1560, Akbar informed Bairam Khan that he should go on a pilgrimage to Mecca. It cannot be denied that the zeal of Akbar became less in this direction towards the end of his reign.

The pilgrim ships going to Mecca had to come into contact with the Portuguese and other European nations who were struggling for supremacy in the Indian Ocean. The result was that occasionally there were troubles. The foreigners took the pilgrim ships as a sort of ransom and dictated their terms. As the Mughal Emperors had no navy of their own, they accepted those terms willy nilly. We are told that in 1665, the pilgrim ship called Ganja Sawai was captured by the notorious pirate John Avery. When the news reached India, the Mughal Governor of Surat arrested all the English residents including the President of the factory and put them in irons. Aurangzeb held the English Company responsible for the misbehaviour of their piratical compatriots and on one occasion in 1689 ordered the Sidi to attack Bombay in revenge for piracies committed on

### Mughal pilgrim ship.

The caste was determined by birth and not by profession. Each caste had developed its own rituals and practices. There was strictness in inter-dining and inter-marrying.

### Customs

Custom also played an important part. The important rites observed by the Hindus were Chhati, Mundan, Chatavan, Vidyarambha, Vivah and Shraddha. Chhati means sixth day after birth. Mundan means the shaving of the head and Chatavan means the taking of cereal for the first time by the child. Vidyarambha means the beginning of education, Vivah means marriage and Shraddha means ceremony after death. The Muslims also observed their own rites of Aquiqah, Bismillah, marriage and Chahlum. Aquiqah was a rite connected with the birth of a child, Bismillah was the beginning of education and Chahlum was observed on the 40th day after death.

### Fairs and Festivals

The Hindus and Muslims observed certain fairs and festivals. The important festivals of the Hindus were Holi, Basant Panchami, Dussehra, Diwali, Shivaratri and Sankranti. To begin with, Holi was celebrated by the cultivators only but later on it came to be observed by all. It was celebrated in the month of Phalgun or March. There was a lot of sprinkling of colour and the smearing of faces with Gulal. Basant Panchami fell in the month of Magh or February. It was considered to be a harbinger of spring. Dussehra was celebrated by all. The Kshatriyas particularly worshipped their arms on this occasion. Diwali was the most popular in the commercial community. On that occasion, the businessmen worshipped the goddess of wealth and opened their new account books. The evil connected with this festival of lamps and illuminations was that of gambling. Sankranti and Purnimah were considered to be auspicious days and a dip in some river on that day was considered to be a pious act. People went to places of pilgrimage such as Pushkar, Kurukshetra, Kashi, Prayag, Puri, etc. The fair of Kumbh was also celebrated by the Hindus who assembled in millions on that occasion.

The important Muslim festivals were Id-ul-Zuha, Id-ul-Fitr, Shab-i-Barat, Muharram and Milad-un-Nabi. Id-ul-Zuha fell on the 10th day of the last month of the Islamic calendar. It was a thanks-giving celebration and animals were sacrificed on that occasion. Id-ul-Fitr fell on the 1st of the 10th month of the Islamic calendar. It was started by the Prophet in the 2nd year of the Hijri era. Shab-i-Barat was observed on the 14th night of the month of Shaban which was eighth month of the Muslim calendar. The Muslims believed that the lives and fortunes of the mortals for the coming year were fixed and registered in heaven. On this day, there were fire-works and illuminations of houses and mosques. The Muharram festival marked the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the younger son of the daughter of the Prophet. This was

observed by the Shia Muslims. Tazia processions were taken out and the decorations were ultimately buried at the Qarbala. Although Aurangzeb put a ban on Muharram processions, the practice of carrying the Tazias was never given up completely. It is being followed even today. Milad-un-nabi or Bara Wafat was associated with the birth of Prophet Mohammad. It fell on the 12th day of the third month of the Islamic calendar.

In addition to the above, Nauroz was celebrated in the aristocratic circles with great pomp and show. It was usually celebrated in large gardens or parks on the river-side. The state banquets were given on that occasion. The Muslims also celebrated the Urs of the various Sufi saints.

### Outdoor Sports

The early Mughal Emperors inherited a taste for outdoor exercise and sport. Although Babar was pre-occupied with wars throughout his life, he was still able to find time for hunting. He was also fond of swimming. As a matter of fact, he swam across every river that came in his way. Only a year before his death, he swam the Ganges. He tells us that "counting every stroke, I crossed it with thirty-three, then, without resting, swam back again. I had swam the other rivers, the Ganges had remained to do". Humayun was addicted to opium but he also possessed a lot of daring and rashness.

Akbar devoted a lot of time to hunting. He knew all about horses, camels, elephants and dogs. He was a fine rider and was able to control the fiercest elephant. It is said about him that before starting a military campaign, he organised a hunting expedition. "He took great pleasure in chasing antelopes with specially trained leopards (Cheetas). He was ready to encounter any beast, however fierce, tiger, lion or other and was prepared to undergo any amount of fatigue in order to run down the game." It is stated that once in the Bikaner desert, he came across a herd of wild asses and while pursuing them, he got separated from his attendants and nearly died of thirst. Akbar also liked hawking. Abul Fazl tells us that "His Majesty, from motives of generosity and from a wish to add splendour to his court, is fond of hunting with falcons, though superficial observers think that merely hunting is his object." Ralph Fitch was very much impressed by the number of the hawks, birds and animals maintained by Emperor Akbar. William Hawkins also says that Jahangir maintained a large number of birds. He was also fond of hunting. On one occasion, he hunted continuously for 2 months and 20 days. A record was kept of the animals killed by the Emperor and Jahangir refers to as many as 17,167. Antelope-hunting was popular under Jahangir.

Shah Jahan was also fond of hunting. Bernier refers to the hunting-expeditions of Aurangzeb. We are told that the killing of the lion by the king was considered to be a favourable omen, but if the animal escaped, that was considered to be a sign of trouble for the future.

Animal-fighting was also popular with the Mughal emperors and their courtiers. Elephants, buffaloes, rams and other beasts and birds took part in those contests. Foreigners were very much impressed by elephant fights. Tom Coryat tells us that "twice every week, elephants fight before him, the bravest spectacle in the world. Many of them are thirteen feet and a half high; and they seem to jostle together like two mountains; and were they not parted in midst of their fighting by certain fireworks, they would exceedingly gore and cruentate one another by their murdering teeth." Edward Terry describes the elephant fights in the reign of Jahangir. In the time of Akbar, elephant fights frequently ended in the deaths of the riders but things changed in the time of Jahangir when the drivers were rarely hurt. Akbar was also fond of seeing gladiatorial contests between men and this kind of amusement was continued during the reign of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. There were also fights between men and animals. Hawkins tells us that Jahangir ordered a Pathan to wrestle with a savage lion and after the man had been killed, he sent for 10 more men to wrestle with the beast. All the 10 were seriously wounded and three of them lost their lives.

The other outdoor amusements popular at that time were wrestling, polo and pigeon-flying. It is stated that the imperial establishment in the reign of Akbar included wrestlers and boxers from Persia and Turan, as well as from northern and western India. Abul Fazl has given a list of the famous wrestlers of his day. He tells us that two well-matched pairs used to wrestle before the Emperor every day for rewards. Polo known as Chugan or Chaugan was introduced into India by the early Mohammadan rulers of Delhi. It is well-known that Kutb-ud-Din Aibak met with his death while playing Polo. Akbar also was very fond of it. Abul Fazl says: "Superficial observers regard the game as a mere amusement and consider it mere play; but of more exalted views see in it a means of learning promptitude and decision. Strong men learn, in playing the game, the art of riding; and the animals learn to perform feats of agility and to obey the reins. It tests the value of a man and strengthens bonds of friendship. Hence His Majesty is very fond of this game. Externally the game adds to the splendour of the court; but viewed from a higher point, reveals concealed talents." Again, "for the sake of adding splendour to the game, His Majesty has knobs of gold and silver fixed to the tops of the Chaugan sticks. If one of them breaks, any player that gets hold of the pieces may keep them." We are told that in 1564, Akbar played Polo continuously for many days. This was done particularly on dark nights when luminous balls made of the wood of Dhak or Palas tree were used. The Mughal courtiers were expected to attend regularly, both to play and watch the game. They were also allowed to bet on the result of the game. It appears that this game lost its popularity during the reigns of his successors.

Pigeon-flying was also popular. It is stated that Akbar learnt the art of pigeon-flying from one of his tutors. After his coming to the throne, Akbar kept more than 20,000 pigeons. They were

divided into ten classes. Akbar was never tired of watching their antics which he called Ishakbazi or love-play. This amusement continued in the time of Jahangir also. Hawkins tells us that Jahangir kept a large number of birds of various kinds, including ten thousand pigeons. We have no evidence on record to show the popularity of this amusement later on. However, pigeon-fighting was a popular game with the common people. Even the poor people managed to keep a few pigeons in their huts.

Chess was also popular during the Mughal period. Writing in the reign of Jahangir, Edward Terry says: "In their houses, they play much the most ingenious game, we call chess or else at tables." Another popular game was Chaupar or backgammon. It is stated in *Ain-i-Akbari* that this game was played on a cloth-board in the form of a cross, each arm of the cross being divided into 24 squares in three rows of 8 each. This board also served the purpose of 3 other games named Phansa, Pachisi and Chandel-Mandal. Phansa was played with dice and Pachisi was played with Kawries. Abul Fazl has given a description of the playing cards used in the Mughal period.

Mujra and Mushaira were also very popular. Mujra means the performance of singers and dancers in private assemblies. Mushaira means the gathering of the poets. The Bajigers moving from place to place also added to the pleasures of the people. Folk singing was also common. Cock-fights, bull-fights and ram-fights were also popular.

### **Dress**

The royal family and the nobility spent a lot of their income on dress, which consisted of a large coat, tight trousers, a turban or cap and silk scarf tied at the waist with the ends hanging down. The nobles also put on daggers, necklaces, ear-tops, etc. The material used in the preparation of the dress varied from individual to individual according to his status and the money in his pocket. Silver, velvet and brocades of different colours and varieties were in fashion. The ordinary people could not afford to put on expensive dresses. The dress which was the most common among the people was the Dhoti. Sometimes, the Muslims used a Pyjayama and a Kurta. Most of the people were virtually half naked. They managed to put on good clothes on festive occasions. The dress of the Hindu ladies was Dhoti or Sari. The Muslim women used the Pyjayama or Gharara with jacket Kurtas. Their head dress was a scarf. The use of ornaments was practically universal.

### **Food**

There was no uniformity in India with regard to the food habits. While the Hindus were mostly vegetarians, the Muslims were generally non-vegetarians. Milk was a very important part of the diet of the people in the villages.

### **Epidemics**

Cholera existed in India during the 17th century. It spread

throughout the country in more or less epidemic form periodically. This must have been so particularly at the places of pilgrimage such as Hardwar, Prayag and Puri. Plague also visited India on many occasions. In 1616, it suddenly appeared in the Punjab. About this disease, Mohammad Khan, author of *Iqbal Nama* says: "When the disease was about to break out, a mouse would rush out of its hole as if mad and striking itself against the door and the walls of the house, would expire. If immediately after this signal, the occupants left the house and went away to the jungle, their lives were saved; if otherwise, the inhabitants of the whole village would be swept away by the hand of death." The plague which started in the Punjab in 1616, spread to almost every part of Northern and Western India. It lasted for 8 years. There was another visitation of this disease in 1689 at Bijapur and in 1703-4 in the Deccan. Abul Fazl refers to "a strong wind of destruction" which prevailed in 1575 in the eastern provinces. Badaoni tells us that "things came to such a pass that the living were unable to bury the dead and threw them head foremost into the river." Another epidemic swept through Ahmedabad in 1618 and was responsible for the deaths of both Indians and Europeans. Floods also were responsible for a lot of destruction.

### Women

Women occupied a high position in the family. They commanded respect. Most of them led a life of dignity and respect. They lived devoted lives. They lived a life of sacrifice. The welfare of the family depended upon their care, love, benevolence and dedication. Polygamy was very common among the Muslims. In some cases, the Hindus also married many wives. Talaq or divorce and re-marriages were common among the Muslims. There was no Talaq among the Hindus.

### Observations by Foreign Travellers

The foreign travellers who visited India have made certain references to the social condition of the people, De Laet tells us that the nobles were well off and their luxury was beyond description. Their only concern in life was to secure a surfeit of every kind of pleasure. Sir Thomas Roe says that the nobles were nothing but voluptuousness and wealth confusedly intermingled. Pelsaert says that there were three classes of people whose status was little removed from slavery. They were the workmen, peons or servants and shopkeepers. The workmen were not paid adequate wages and their services were not voluntary. They could be made to work in the house of a noble or an officer and they were bound to accept whatever was paid to them as their remuneration. They took only one meal a day and that was in the form of *Khichri*. Their houses were made of mud with thatched roofs. There was practically no furniture in those houses. The number of the servants was large as their wages were low. When these servants were attached to a powerful officer, they oppressed the people and "sinned on the strength of their master's greatness." They were not honest

and they demanded and got what was called *Dasturi* to supplement their income. The shopkeepers adopted all kinds of devices to conceal their wealth because informers "swarmed like flies round the governors and gave false information." The shopkeepers were required to supply goods to the king and his officers at a rate which was less than the market rate. Most of the business was in the hands of the Hindus. The only thing done by the Muslims was dyeing and weaving. The Hindus and Muslims believed in astrology. The Muslims worshipped a number of priests and prophets. There was so great hatred between the Sunnis and Shias that they called each other *Kafirs*. Beggary was common. Tavernier praises the Hindus for their thrift, sobriety and honesty. To quote him, "Hindus are morally well. When married they are rarely unfaithful to their wives. Adultery is rare among them and one never hears unnatural crimes spoken of."

Towards the end of the reign of Aurangzeb, there was a decline in society. Mughal aristocracy lost its moral stamina. The sons of the nobles were brought up in the company of women and eunuchs and they acquired all their vices. There was corruption everywhere. The *Muhatsibs* appointed by Aurangzeb failed to improve the lives of the people. There was practically no originality and intellectual vigour among the people. Eunuchs were freely made and sold. The standard of public morality fell. Bribes were accepted without shame or scruples.

### **Economic Condition**

Very little is known about the economic condition of the people of India during the reigns of Babur and Humayun. It is true that Babur has given us a description of the people of India in his *Memoirs* but that is not considered to be accurate. In *Humayun-Nama* of Gulbadan Begam, there is a reference to the cheap prices that prevailed in the country. It is stated that four goats could be had for one rupee at Amarkot, the place where Akbar was born. A reference to the *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl also shows that wheat was sold at that time at the rate of 12 Dams per Man, Barley at 8, Gram at 16½, Jawar at 10, Millet at 8, Ghee at 105, oil at 80, Milk at 25, and White sugar at 128 Dams per Man. The vegetables were also cheap. A sheep could be had for Rs. 1-8-0 and a cow for Rs. 10. The Man of Akbar was equal to 55½ Pounds. If the prices of the commodities were low, the wages were also low. An unskilled labourer ordinarily earned 2 Dams or 1/20th part of a rupee per day. A highly skilled labourer, e.g., a carpenter, was paid 7 Dams a day. The view of V. A. Smith and Moreland is that the ordinary labourer in the time of Akbar had more to eat than he has now and he was happier then than he is to-day. That was very much due to the fact that the prices of grains were very low.

### **Currency**

Sher Shah Suri abolished the old currency and issued a copper coin called *Dam*. Its weight varied between 311 grains and 322 grains. The *Dam* was a copper coin which was 40th part of the

rupee. Its weight was 5 tankas or one tola, 8 mashas and 7 surkhs. The weight of a silver rupee was  $11\frac{1}{2}$  Mashas. Such a rupee was introduced by Sher Shah. The coin which was generally used by the people was the Dam. The revenue of the State was also calculated in terms of Dam. There was not much alteration in the currency after the death of Akbar. The Rupee contained 175 grains of silver. It was worth 40 Dams upto 1616. From 1627 onwards, the value of a rupee was about 30 Dams. There were rupees of several denominations and weights, but the Chalani was accepted as the standard coin. The foreign travellers specifically tell us that the Indian rupee was made of pure silver.

### Famines

There were many famines during the Mughal period. Badaoni tells us that a famine broke out in the neighbourhood of Agra and Biyana in 1555-56. He writes thus about that famine: "Men ate their own kind and the appearance of the famished sufferers was so hideous that one could scarcely look upon them. The whole country was a desert." There was another serious famine in 1573-74 in Gujarat. The prices shot up and the people suffered terribly.

Another famine lasted for four years from 1595 to 1598. On that occasion, "Men ate their own kind and streets were blocked up with dead bodies and no assistance could be rendered for the removal." The famine was followed by epidemics and floods. It is pointed out that Akbar was the first ruler who provided relief to those who had suffered from famines.

There was no serious famine in the reign of Jahangir. However, a terrible famine broke out in the reign of Shahjahan in 1630. The territories affected were the Deccan, Gujarat and Khandesh. Mirza Amin Qazwini tells us that great distress prevailed everywhere. The grocers and traders mixed powdered bones with flour. The flesh of dogs was taken for meat by the ignorant people. Abdul Hamid Lahori says: "Destitution at length reached such a pitch that men began to devour each other and the flesh of a son was preferred to his love. The number of the dying caused obstructions in the roads and every man whose dire sufferings did not terminate in death and who retained the power to move wandered off to the towns and villages of other countries. Those lands which had been famous for fertility and plenty now retained no trace of productiveness." Peter Mundy, the European traveller, has described the condition in these words: "The highways were strewn with corpses which emitted intolerable stench. In the towns especially they drag them (dead bodies) out by the heels stark-naked, of all ages and sexes, till they are out of the gates, and there they are left so that the way is half-barred up." The condition was so serious that crowds of people shouted: "Give us food or kill us." The famine had disastrous effect on trade. Indigo became scarce. The price of cotton cloth went up. All business came to a standstill. Roads were full of robbers. It became difficult to take goods from one place to another.

Between 1635 and 1643, general scarcity was felt by the people. There was famine also in certain parts of India. However, in 1645-46,

there was an intense famine on the Coromandel Coast. The situation was so serious that the people were willing to become slaves in order to save their lives. There was great misery on the Madras Coast as a result of the failure of rains in 1646. In 1650 again, there was deficiency of rains in all parts of India. In 1658, the prices of provisions doubled at Surat. Famine and disease swept away a large number of people. There was great distress in Sindh. Khafi Khan wrote in 1659 that prices had gone up on account of the failure of rains and movement of the armies. It is true that there was no serious famine in the reign of Aurangzeb but the people suffered terribly on account of perpetual wars. Cultivation was neglected. Industries suffered. The lot of the people became miserable.

### **Agriculture**

Agriculture was the main industry of the people of India. The peasants took full advantage of the peace established by the Mughals in the country. They were willing to devote all their time and energy to produce more. It is true that the prices were low and the peasants could afford to live within less money, but on the whole their condition was very hard. The demands of the king, the officials and the nobles did not leave much with them.

Most of the rice was grown in India in Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, the Eastern Coast, the Western Coast, the Tamil countries and Kashmir. Allahabad, Avadh, Khandesh and Gujarat also produced some rice. Wheat and barley were grown in the Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Agra, etc. Jawar was the main kharif crop in Dipalpur region. Wheat was the principal Rabi crop. Millets were particularly grown in Ajmer, Gujarat and Kandesh. Pulses were produced all over the country. Cash crops like cotton and sugarcane were known as Jins-i-Kamil or Jins-i-Ala. Cotton was produced mostly in Khandesh and Bengal. Bengal was famous for producing large quantities of sugar of high quality. The best quality of indigo was produced in the Bavana region and in Sarkhej near Ahmedabad. Lower quality of indigo was cultivated in the Doab, Bengal, Telingana and Sindh.

The chief items of non-agricultural production were fisheries, minerals, salt, sugar, opium, indigo and liquor. Copper was produced in the mines of Central India and Rajputana. Iron was produced in many parts of India. Salt was got from the mines of the Punjab, from the Sambar Lake and from the waters of the sea. Refined sugar was got from Bengal. However, most of the people used Gur of molasses as white sugar was very costly, and only the rich could afford to buy it. Opium was produced in Malwa and Bihar. Indigo was produced at Biana and other places. It is true that efforts were made to restrict the manufacture of liquor but those efforts did not succeed. There was a great demand for the production of saltpetre.

### **Goods Manufactured**

The important crafts of Mughal India were wooden bedsteads, chests, stools and boxes. Leather goods were produced in small

quantities. Paper, pottery and bricks were also manufactured in large quantities. Edward Terry tells us that many curious boxes, trunks, standishes (pen cases), carpets, etc., were procurable in Mughal dominions. Many craftsmen possessed great artistic ability but as the amount of money to be spent on the materials to be used was very high, the necessity of the middle man was very much felt, and it is he who enriched himself at the cost of those who manufactured it. Silk weaving was in practice but the demand was not much. It is true that the patronage of Akbar gave this industry some stimulus and silk weaving centres were set up at Lahore, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, and also some places in Gujarat, but still the demand was not much. The Shawl and carpet weaving industries were also patronised by Akbar. The Shawls were woven at Lahore. Carpets were manufactured at Lahore and Agra. Inducements were offered to foreign carpet-weavers to settle in Agra. Fatehpur Sikri and Lahore and manufacture carpets, which could compete with those got from Persia. In spite of this, the import of Persian carpets was considerable. Indian industry did not make much headway.

Excellent cotton cloth was manufactured at Banaras, at Agra, in Malwa, the Deccan and Gujarat. Muslin of very fine quality, "the best and finest in all India" was produced at Sonargaon in the Dacca district. Miscellaneous goods such as cotton carpets, coverlets, rugs, ropes, bed-tapes, etc., were manufactured everywhere. Moreland tells us that "the aggregate production of cotton goods was one of the great facts of the industrial world of the year 1600." So much of cotton cloth was produced in the country that after clothing the people of India, the same was exported to Africa, Arabia, Egypt, Burma, Malacca, the Straits and other Asiatic markets. The demand for Indian cotton cloth was increased all the more by the activities of the English and Dutch traders who carried the Indian goods to European markets. It is rightly pointed out that the English traders laid the foundation of the Gujarat export trade in calicoes. Madras calicoes were also sent to foreign countries. With the rise in demand, more and more of cotton cloth came to be produced in the country.

Metal work also developed considerably during the Mughal period. Indian swords and daggers won great popularity. Gold and silver were used for ornaments. Building industry also developed during this period. Precious stones were mined on a large scale and cut to different shapes.

### Foreign Trade

There was a great increase in the foreign trade of the country. Akbar and Jahangir took great interest in the foreign sea-borne trade, although they took no steps to strengthen their navy in order to establish Mughal supremacy on the sea. Akbar himself took part in foreign trade and was anxious to make profits out of it. In the time of Akbar, the important outlets for foreign sea-borne trade were the posts of Cambay and Surat, Bengal (particularly Satgaon), the Coromondal coast, the Malabar coast and the Indus. It appears

that the Bengal ports were not so much popular as the other ports. That was partly due to the constant wars and rebellions and also the presence of the pirates in the Hugli. On land, the export trade followed the routes from Lahore to Kabul and from Multan to Kandhar. The traffic was restricted and irregular. That was due to the fact that the goods were to be carried on pack-animals and there was always the danger of robbery and violence on the way.

In the time of Akbar, the chief items of export were textiles, pepper, indigo, opium and other drugs and miscellaneous goods. What was imported from abroad was bullion, horses, metals, ivory, drugs, China goods, precious stones, coral, textiles including silk, velvet brocade and broad cloth, European wines and African slaves. China goods were imported in large quantities as there was a great demand for them not only by the Emperor but also by the nobles.

The total foreign trade of India at the beginning of the 17th century was not very large. That was partly due to the fact that there was no market for European goods among the people of India on account of the high prices of European goods. Moreover, the Indian traders demanded that they must be paid in gold or silver for the goods exported from India. However, things changed a little after the death of Akbar as foreign merchants gradually opened new markets for Indian calicoes, saltpetre, indigo, raw silk and other commodities and Europe had to find money for her agents in India to buy Indian goods. During the reigns of Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb, the Dutch and the English set up direct trade between India and the West. By 1625, the trade in indigo and calicoes was established. Surat became the chief centre for European imports and exports. By 1650, the English and the Dutch were firmly established in all the important parts of the coast from Sindh to Bengal. The calicoes of Madras, saltpetre of Bihar and the silk and sugar of Bengal were the important items of India's trade with Europe during the time of Aurangzeb. It is interesting to note that Mughal emperors imported dogs from Europe. Terry tells us that two dogs were brought by Sir Thomas Roe for Jahangir and the Emperor asked him to send for another pair of dogs.

It is pointed out that Indian merchants were as clever as their foreign counterparts. A reference in this connection can be made to Virji Vora who between 1619 and 1670 financed the transactions of the English merchants and practically controlled the whole trade of Surat. He was supposed to be the richest merchant in the world. However, Indian merchants had to face certain dangers. One such danger was the possibility of interference by the local Mughal governor or other high official who might appear in the market at any time as buyer or seller of practically any commodity. When that happened, competition was displaced by force. He could also set up a monopoly as was done by the Governor of Allahabad in 1647 in indigo. He could form a "corner" or combine as the Governor of Surat did in foodgrains in 1632, although the district was suffering from famine at that time. He could even monopolise the whole trade of a port as was done at Hugli in 1635-36. He could indulge in wholesale and lengthy commercial operations as was done

by Mir Jumra. The latter ordered in 1659 the doors of the English Factory of Kasim Bazar in Bengal to be closed. He ordered the Indian merchants not to trade with the English. It is also pointed out that rich traders could be insulted or harrassed at any time. We are told that in 1638, Virji Vora was put in prison and he suffered "most barbarous tyranny" under the orders of the Governor of Surat.

A wide gulf separated the producers from the consumers. While the agriculturists, the industrial workers and the traders were the producers, the consuming class consisted of the servants of the Government, the professional and religious classes and slaves and servants. It is pointed out that all the requirements of the state and the society could have been met by employing a very small number of persons. A good bit of money could be saved by having a small well-trained army. A lot of income of the Mughal administration was wasted on superfluous services and unfortunately the cost of that extravagance had to be shouldered by the producing class. The nobles and the high officials who were mostly foreigners were highly paid by Akbar. Their emoluments were increased during the reigns of his successors. As they had a lot, they spent the same lavishly. Moreover, the law of escheat by which all the property of a Mansabdar was confiscated by the State on his death also encouraged extravagance and waste. As every Mansabdar knew that whatever he saved would be taken away by the Government, he did not hesitate to spend all that he had. A good bit of the money was wasted on marriages in the form of dowries. Money was wasted on luxuries. The rest of it was spent on raising monuments. Fruits were imported from Samarkand and other distant places and that involved a lot of waste. Too much was wasted on food. There was a lot of extravagance in the matter of dresses and jewellery. A lot was spent on elephants and horses. Wealth was also wasted on gambling and decorations. The menial staff maintained by a Mansabdar could be counted in hundreds. The larger the number the better as the status of a man was judged from the number of the servants maintained by him. Bernier rightly points out that most of the nobles and high officials were in debt. In order to help themselves, they oppressed as much as they could the common people.

The gulf between the rich and the poor was very wide. While the rich lived in luxury, the poor just managed to subsist. On account of the oppressions practised by the officials and the nobles, there was no incentive to work hard. No wonder, the land was often tilled only under compulsion and there was continuous emigration to the territories of the Hindu Rajas by persons who were sick of the tyranny of the Mughal bureaucracy. A contemporary account is that "so much is wrung from the peasants that even dry bread is scarcely left to them for their food."

One cannot help observing that during the Mughal period, there was inadequate production and faulty distribution. The situation continued to deteriorate with the passage of time. It is rightly pointed out that the great evil was "administrative exploitation, which in Akbar's time and from a much earlier period dominated and sterilized the energies of the population of India." The pro-

ducers were always at the mercy of bureaucracy and the nobility who were accustomed to a life of luxury and display and did not hesitate to exploit and harass the masses who contributed "half their gross income to the support of a relatively small number of economic parasites". Mr. W. H. Moreland in his book entitled "From Akbar to Aurangzeb" has made the following observation with regard to the economic system during the major portion of the 17th century: "Weavers, naked themselves, toiled to clothe others. Peasants, themselves hungry, toiled to feed the towns and cities. India, taken as a unit, parted with useful commodities in exchange for gold and silver, or in other words, gave bread for stones. Men and women, living from season to season on the verge of hunger could be contented so long as the supply of food held out: when it failed, as it so often did, their hope of salvation was the slave-trader, and the alternatives were cannibalism, suicide, or starvation. The only way of escape from that system lay through an increase in production, coupled with a rising standard of life, but this road was barred effectively by the administrative methods in vogue, which penalised production and regarded every indication of increased consumption as a signal for fresh extortion."

There is a lot of truth in the contention that India seemed to be wealthy to a casual traveller who visited only the great cities. There he found a lot of display and pomp and show. Actually, the preponderating majority of the people were poor and wealth was concentrated in the hands of only a microscopic minority. Princes and princesses may have changed their clothes many times a day and lived a life of luxury and waste, but the lot of most of the people was not at all enviable. About the people of India, Bernier wrote: "The inhabitants have less the appearance of moneyed people than those of many other parts of the globe."

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## CHAPTER XIV

# Later Mughals

Aurangzeb died in 1707 and before his death he left a will by which he partitioned his empire among his three sons. In spite of this, a bitter fratricidal war took place among the three sons of Aurangzeb. Nobody cared for the will of his father. Muazzam was the eldest son of Aurangzeb and he was the ruler of Kabul and the Punjab. Mohammad Azim was the second son and he was the ruler of Malwa and Gujarat. Kam Bakhsh was the third son and he was the ruler of the Deccan.

Prince Muazzam heard the news of the death of his father while he was at Jamrud in Afghanistan and he rushed to Delhi to contest for the throne. He was assisted by Munim Khan. His second son, Azim-ush-Shan, also hurried to Agra and occupied the same. Muazzam himself reached Agra in June 1707 and occupied the Fort and took into possession about Rs. 24 crores.

Prince Mohammad Azam also declared himself Emperor and got coins struck in his own name. He also proceeded towards Agra to make a bid for the throne. However, he was defeated and killed along with his two sons. Prince Muazzam declared himself Emperor and took up the title of Bahadur Shah I. Kam Bakhsh also tried his luck. He too was defeated in a battle near Hyderabad and died in 1708.

About the effects of the war of succession, D. Satish Chandra says : "The War of Succession served to weaken the Empire further. About ten thousand men, and many brave and tried nobles, some of whom had won great reputation and experience against the Marathas were killed. Dalpat Bundela and Ram Singh Hara, the lieutenants of Zulfiqar Khan, also perished on the battle-field. The two contestants, especially Shah Alam made lavish gifts and promises to the soldiers and nobles in order to win their support, and thus further worsened the already precarious financial position of the Empire." (*Party and Politics at the Mughal Court*, p. 18).

### **Bahadur Shah (1707-12)**

At the time of his succession to the throne, Bahadur Shah was over 63, and as such had passed the age when he could be expected to show initiative in any work. According to Irvine,

Bahadur Shah was a "man of mild and equitable temper, learned, dignified and generous to a fault."

According to J. N. Sarkar, "Bahadur Shah had a mild and calm temper, great dignity of behaviour, and excessive and inconsiderate generosity of disposition. He was learned and pious, without any bigotry, and possessed a power of self-control and profound dissimulation which was styled personal cowardice by his rival A'zam Shah. He was incapable of saying no to anybody, and his only idea of statesmanship was to let matters drift and patch up a temporary peace by humouring everybody, without facing issues and saving future trouble by making decisions promptly and courageously. Still the traditions of the dignity of the empire and of good administration left by Aurangzeb continued through his short reign, as he inherited his father's able officers and treated them with confidence and respect. On his accession, his own weak position and softness of fibre, coupled with advanced age, prevented him from asserting his will in any matter."<sup>1</sup>

According to Khafi Khan, "for generosity, munificence, boundless good nature, extenuation of faults and forgiveness of offences, very few monarchs have been found equal to Bahadur Shah in the histories of past times, and especially in the race of Timur. But though he had no voice in his character, such complacency and such negligence were exhibited in the protection of the state and in the government and management of the country that witty sarcastic people found the date of his accession in the words : **Shah-i-be-Khabar** (Heedless King)." He could not say anything to any one as he did not want to displease anyone. He was prepared to compromise even in most important political and administrative matters. He had promised Munim Khan the Prime Ministership, but the same was claimed by Asad Khan, his father's Prime Minister. The result was that Bahadur Shah tried to please both. Accordingly he appointed Munim Khan as Revenue Minister and allowed Asad Khan to continue as Prime Minister. This arrangement did not please either of the two parties and also led to administrative complications.

It was during his reign that intrigues began to increase in the court and he felt that he was too weak to suppress them. Three parties came into existence, viz., the Turanian, the Persian and the Hindustani parties. These parties were responsible for a lot of trouble in the time of the successor of Bahadur Shah.

Bahadur Shah had to deal with many problems which faced him at the time of the accession to the throne. As regards the Marathas, he released Sahu, the son of Sambhaji, and the grandson of Shivaji. Sahu had been imprisoned in the time of Aurangzeb and he had spent all his childhood in Mughal custody. He was released on the suggestion of Zulfikar Khan. He was also given the right to Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of six provinces of the Deccan.

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1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV.

The money was to be collected by the Mughal Officers and then handed over to Sahu. The release of Sahu was a great diplomatic move. This started rivalry amongst the Marathas. Tara Bai, the widow of Raja Ram, contested the claims of Sahu. There was a civil war among the Marathas and that kept them busy throughout the reign of Bahadur Shah.

As regards the Rajput policy, both Azam and Bahadur Shah had sought Rajput support. Azam had granted to Ajit Singh and Jai Singh the titles of Maharaja and Mirza Raja, the ranks of 7,000/7,000 and the Governorships of Gujarat and Malwa respectively. Jai Singh had joined Azam Shah in Malwa but deserted him during the battle of Jaju. However, he received no favour from Bahadur Shah who had been joined by Vijai Singh, the younger brother of Jai Singh. Ajit Singh joined neither side and took advantage of the civil war to expel the Mughal commander from Jodhpur. He did not attend the court, or send the customary garlands to Bahadur Shah on his accession to the throne. In Jodhpur, he was said to be "oppressing the Musalmans, forbidding them the killing of cows, preventing the summons to prayer, razing the mosques which had been built after the destruction of idol-temples in the late reign and repairing and building new idol-temples." The Rana of Udaipur and Raja Jai Singh were said to be acting in close co-operation with him.

Hence, a war to punish Ajit Singh and to destroy his coalition was decided upon, and Mihrab Khan was appointed the Faujdar of Jodhpur in October, 1707. Emperor Bahadur Shah himself set out for Rajputana in November 1707, marching by way of Amber and Ajmer. Bahadur Shah directed that as there was a dispute for the Kachhwada throne between the two brothers, Jai Singh and Vijai Singh, the state "should be confiscated to the imperial establishment," that the name of the town should be changed to Islamabad and that a new Faujdar should be sent there. The kingdom of Amber was conferred on Vijai Singh.

When Bahadur Shah advanced beyond Amber, Rana Amar Singh of Udaipur averted a threatened invasion of his country by sending his brother, Bakht Singh, to wait on the new Emperor with a letter of congratulations and a Nazar of 100 gold coins, 1,000 rupees, two horses, one elephant etc. Although Raja Amar Singh ran away from his capital along with family, Bahadur Shah accepted his submission. When Bahadur Shah reached near Ajmer, peace offers were received from Ajit Singh but those were not accepted. The new Faujdar of Jodhpur reached Mertha and after defeating the army under Ajit Singh, occupied the town. Farmans were sent to Durga Das and Ajit Singh calling them to the court. Ajit Singh sent a reply professing submission but entertaining doubts regarding the Emperor's intentions. Hence Khan-i-Zaman, the son of Munim Khan, was sent to Jodhpur along with Raja Budh Singh Hara, and Najabat Khan to meet and re-assure Ajit Singh. On February 24, 1708 Ajit Singh formally surrendered to Bahadur Shah at Mertha. He was graciously received and restored to the Mansab of 3,500/3,000

which he had held during the previous reign and was also granted the title of Maharaja. Two of his sons were also granted Mansabs.

Due to his distrust of the Rajputs and in order to vindicate his own prestige, Bahadur Shah decided to keep hold of Jodhpur. Jizia was also levied there. Ajit Singh and Jai Singh were kept in a state of semi-captivity in the imperial camp while the Emperor marched to the south to deal with Kam Bakhsh. However, on April 30, 1708, the two Rajas effected their escape. As Bahadur Shah considered the matter of Kam Bakhsh to be more important, he refrained from ordering a pursuit. That was in a way a breakdown of the Rajput policy pursued by Bahadur Shah at the instance of Munim. Bahadur Shah has been condemned for his policy. It is pointed out that both Ajit Singh and Jai Singh should have been given assurances and concessions by the Emperor. After effecting their escape, Jai Singh and Ajit Singh proceeded to Udaipur where they made an agreement with the Maharana for joint resistance to the Mughals. The Rajput Rajas planned not only to recover their countries but also to expel the Mughal influence from Rajputana completely. After dispersing, Ajit Singh attacked and occupied Jodhpur and Jai Singh recovered Amber. They then overran the Mughal outpost in Hindaun and Bayana. When Bahadur Shah learnt all about this, he ordered Asad Khan, the Wakil-i-Mutlaq, to march from Delhi to Agra and to take steps to repress the disturbances. A number of well-known warriors and generals were appointed to help him but those nobles never marched. Instead, Asad Khan and Zulfiqar Khan who did not agree with Munim Khan's Rajput policy, opened negotiations with Jai Singh and Ajit Singh. Meanwhile, the rainy season of 1708 was over. The Rajput armies attacked the environs of Ajmer and besieged the town for 11 days before they were repulsed by the Subahdar. The Rajputs then invaded Sambar. In the battle, the noted warrior, Husain Khan was incidentally killed and that gave the Rajputs a notable victory. They made little progress elsewhere and contented themselves mostly with plundering.

On October 6, 1708, the Rajput Rajas were restored to their Mansabs at the instance of Asad Khan and Prince Azim-ush-Shan who was then the favourite of his father, Bahadur Shah. However, the question of returning their capitals was not decided. Asad Khan who had been put in supreme charge of the Provinces of Lahore, Delhi and Ajmer, offered to grant Sanads of their homelands to the Rajas, "provided they raised their Thanas from Sambhar and Didwana and accepted appointments to the Provinces of Kabul and Gujarat." The Rajas were not willing to be separated or to accept appointments far away from their homes and asked for the posts of the Subahdars of Malwa and Gujarat.

After defeating Kam Bakhsh, Bahadur Shah turned his attention towards Rajputa in February 1709. Following the restoration of the Rajas to their Mansabs, an uneasy truce had prevailed since October 1708. It appears that a powerful section of the

court was in favour of a stern policy towards the Rajputs. Ghaziud-Din Firuz Jang was appointed to Ajmer and directed to his charge immediately from Ahmedabad. It was also reported that the Emperor was returning "resolved to lead an army to punish and chastise the Rajputs." The result was that the Rajputs sought the mediation of their old friends, Asad Khan and Prince Azim-ush-Shan. Their intervention coupled with the news of a Sikh uprising in the Punjab tipped the scales in favour of a compromise. It was reported that Wazir Khan, the Faujdar of Sirhind, had met his death at the hands of Banda Bahadur. The possible consequences of a popular uprising, such as that of the Sikhs, were considered to be more dangerous than the quarrel with the Rajputs. It was felt that the Rajputs were the old allies of the Mughals for generations and could not be the source of any big danger in the future. Hence, a settlement was made with the Rajput Rajas. Their homelands were returned to them and their demand for an audience with the Emperor on the march was accepted. It was also agreed that they would be given six months' leave immediately after their audience with the Emperor after which they would serve wherever appointed. On June 21, 1710, while the Emperor was on the march, the two Rajas were presented before him by Mahabat Khan, son of Munim Khan and after the ceremonies of greetings and presents, they were immediately given six months' leave to return home.

The Rajput affairs remained in that condition during the remaining years of the reign of Bahadur Shah. Munim Khan was not inclined to accept the demands of Rajput Rajas for appointment as the Governors of Malwa and Gujarat. He urged them to accept appointment to Kabul and Gujarat. Azim-ush-Shan promised them appointments after the Rajas had come to the court but the Rajas were not enthusiastic about the proposals and hence delayed their appearance at the court. It was only in October, 1711 that the two Rajas arrived at the court to render service. Munim Khan was dead by that time and Prince Azim-ush-Shan had become the centre of all the affairs. The Rajas were appointed to Sadhaura and they served there with a large army, guarding the foot hills, from raids of the followers of Banda.

It is clear from above that the Rajput policy of Bahadur Shah underwent a definite evolution. To begin with, he tried to maintain Mughal control over Jodhpur by force of arms and even to extend the Mughal hold on Rajputana by displacing Jai Singh from the Gaddi of Amber in favour of his younger brother and stationing an imperial Faujdar at Amber. That led to a serious uprising in Rajputana when Bahadur Shah went to the Deccan to fight against Kam Bakhsh. It was on account of the uprising in the Punjab that a policy of reconciliation was followed towards them. The net result was that the gulf with the Rajputs was narrowed but not bridged.

The Sikhs created trouble at this time. After the death of Guru Gobind Singh, Banda Bahadur became the leader of the Sikhs. He collected thousands of Sikhs from all over the province

to fight the Muslims. Taking advantage of the absence of the Mughal Emperor in the Deccan, Banda was able to strengthen his position. He attacked the town of Sirhind. Wazir Khan, the Governor, put up a stiff resistance, but was killed. Sirhind was captured and plundered. The Sikhs carried out a wholesale massacre of the Muslim population of Sirhind and even children and women were put to the sword. The whole of the province of Sirhind from the Sutlej to the Jumna passed into the hands of the Sikhs. Saharanpur was also captured. Karnal also met a similar fate. The Sikhs reached the neighbourhood of Delhi and the reports of their plunder reached the Mughal Emperor. The Emperor proceeded against the Sikhs in person. The Fort of Lohgarh was besieged by the Mughal army and captured in November 1710. However, Banda escaped from the fort and retired to the hills. The emperor retired to Lahore and died in February 1712. The Sikhs continued to give trouble during all this period.

Dr. Satish Chandra says that "in spite of concentrating large armies and the best generals in the Punjab for a year and a half, Bahadur Shah failed to crush the Sikh uprising. The basic cause of this must be considered not so much the weakness of the imperialists as the nature of the Sikh uprising and the tactics of the Guru. The Sikhs once again proved the truth demonstrated earlier by the Marathas and the Rajputs that an army enjoying the support of the local population, making skilful use of the terrain, and led by commanders who followed the methods of guerilla-warfare could hold out against a much superior enemy, if not indefinitely, then at least for a long time.

"The Sikh movement assumed the character of a struggle for an independent Sikh state. If the attempt had succeeded, it would have given impetus to similar movements elsewhere, and largely altered the political picture of the eighteenth century." (**Party and Politics at the Mughal Court**, p. 53).

About the reign of Bahadur Shah, Dr. Satish Chandra points out that it "witnessed a sharp deterioration in the financial situation and a further accentuation of the crisis of the jagirdari system, although Munim Khan and a few others sought to check the worst abuses and to prevent a reckless growth in the ranks and numbers of the mansabdars and other grantees. In the realm of policy, the association of the state with religious orthodoxy was considerably weakened, a more tolerant attitude was adopted towards the Hindus, and the rigid approach of Aurangzeb to the Rajput and Maratha problems was gradually modified. But these new approaches were still too tentative and half-hearted to yield any definite results. It appears that by a process of trial and error, Bahadur Shah was feeling his way towards a more liberal and acceptable policy, and that he might have succeeded in evolving lasting solutions to some of the problems if he had lived longer. As it was, he failed to reap any definite political advantages from his policy of cautious compromise, and bequeathed to his successors a more difficult situation than the one he had inherited." (**Party and Politics at the Mughal Court**, p. 60).

### Jahandar Shah (1712-13)

After the death of Bahadur Shah I, there was a war of succession among his four sons and ultimately Jahandar Shah came out victorious with the help of Zulfikar Khan. According to Owen, Jahandar Shah "was an utterly degenerate representative of the house of Timur, Babur and Akbar. Frivolous, profligate, cruel and cowardly, servilely devoted to a favourite lady Lal Kanwar whose relatives he promoted wholesale to high honours, to the disgust of the old nobles and the able and experienced servants of the state, he soon became generally odious and despicable."<sup>1</sup> It is true that in youth he was an active soldier, but later on, he sank himself into sloth and debauchery. He behaved like an upstart and left the affairs of the state into the hands of those who had practically no ability or experience whatsoever. After a reign of 11 months, he was strangled in the fort of Delhi by the orders of Farrukhsiyar in 1713.

### Farrukhsiyar (1713-19)

At the time of his accession to the throne, Farrukhsiyar was a youngman of 30. Although he was extremely handsome, he was utterly weak, thoughtless and devoid of physical and moral courage. "Like all weak men, he was swayed by the latest adviser and having resolved to do a thing could never hold to it long but soon sank into despair and went back into his own undertakings. Constitutionally incapable of governing by his own will and controlling others, he would not trust any able agent, but was easily inspired by a childish suspicion of his ministers and induced to enter into plots in their favour." All his life Farrukhsiyar was conspiring to dispose of the Sayyid Brothers who were rightly known as "King-makers". However, no plot was ever executed, but the imperial bickerings had a very evil effect on the administration of the country.

Taking advantage of the trouble that followed the death of Bahadur Shah, the Sikhs under Banda had strengthened their position. In 1714, Abdul Samad was sent to Lahore as Governor and he was instructed to undertake the work of the suppression of the Sikhs. Unfortunately for Banda, there arose dissensions among the Sikhs. Some of the Sikhs did not approve of the religious practices of Banda and consequently withdrew from his camp. The result was that the position of Banda became weak and he was hunted down from place to place. He surrendered in December 1715 and was made a prisoner along with 740 followers. They were all brought to Delhi and put to death after savage tortures in 1716. "The Sikhs showed wonderful patience and strength of mind, and welcomed death as deliverance; not one of them accepted the offer of Islam to save his life. Banda himself and his little son of three years were brutally hacked to death on 19th June, 1716."

The Sayyid Brothers were sick of the constant plotting of Farrukhsiyar. He was dragged down from his throne, "bare-headed

and bare-footed, and subjected every moment to blows and vilest abuse." He was imprisoned, starved, blinded, poisoned and strangled to death.

The question has been raised as to how far the treatment meted out to Farrukhsiyar was justified. The contention of the Sayyid Brothers was that they did everything in self-defence and Farrukhsiyar deserved a worse fate. Others have denounced the Sayyid Brothers for their ghastly act of blinding and strangling their master. However, according to Irvine, "The way of doing what had become almost a necessity was unduly harsh, too utterly regardless of the personal dignity of the fallen monarch. Blinding a deposed king was the fixed usage ; for that the Sayyids are not specially to blame. But the severity of the subsequent confinement was excessive and the taking of the captive's life was an extremity entirely uncalled for."

### **Rafi-ud-Darajat (1719)**

The Sayyid Brothers put Rafi-ud-Darajat on the throne on 28th February 1719. Although he was a youngman of 20 at the time of his accession to the throne, he was suffering from consumption. No wonder, he became a puppet in the hands of the Sayyid Brothers who carried on the administration in his name. In spite of this, he was deposed on 4th June 1719, and he died a few days after.

### **Rafi-ud-Daula alias Shah Jahan II (1719)**

The new king Rafi-ud-Daula was the elder brother of Rafi-ud-Darajat. He was also suffering from consumption. He also was a puppet in the hands of the Sayyid Brothers. He ruled from June to September 1719 and died on 17th September 1719.

### **Muhammad Shah (1719-48)**

After the death of Rafi-ud-Daula in September 1719, Muhammad Shah was put on the throne by the Sayyid Brothers who wanted to rule through the medium of an imperial puppet. Although he himself was put on the throne by the Sayyid Brothers, Muhammad Shah tried to dispose them of and he succeeded in doing so in 1722.

### **Sayyid Brothers**

It is desirable to make a special reference to the rise and fall of the power of the Sayyid Brothers. They were two brothers, Hussain Ali and Abdulla. Hussain Ali was the Governor of Bihar and Abdulla was the Governor of Allahabad. Both of them were born in India and were known for their bravery. They came to power in the time of Farrukhsiyar and were responsible for his disposition. They were Shias and consequently were hated by the Sunnis. Farrukhsiyar tried to dispose them of but failed. On the other hand, they tried and disposed him of. It is the Sayyid Brothers who put Muhammad Shah on the throne.

It is remarkable to note that the Sayyid Brothers not only believed but also acted upon the policy of religious toleration. They

were responsible for the abolition of **Jizya** and a conciliatory policy towards the Rajputs. They appointed Raja Ratan Chand as Diwan. They were responsible for formation of Hindustani Party which included both Hindus and Muslims. The Rajputs were the strongest supporters of the Sayyid Brothers on account of their policy of reconciliation.

However, the Sayyid Brothers fell. The Mughal nobles were jealous of the positions occupied by the two brothers. The strangling of Farrukhsiyar shocked the people. Their Shia faith alienated the Sunni Muslims. Muhammad Shah, although their own nominee on the throne, was determined to finish their power. No wonder, a plot was formed against them under the leadership of Nizam-ul-Mulk and Sadat Khan.<sup>1</sup> The conspirators were joined by many groups. There was a revolt. Hussain Ali was killed. Abdulla was defeated near Agra and made a prisoner. In 1722 he was poisoned.

It might have been expected that the disposal of the Sayyid Brothers would have strengthened the hands of Muhammad Shah. Unfortunately that was not so. "Young and handsome, and fond of all kinds of pleasures, he addicted himself to an inactive life which entirely enervated the energy of the Empire." Muhammad Shah's reign was long and there were some redeeming traits in his character. Unluckily, he did not take interest in the affairs of the state and the consequences were most fatal. Province after province became independent. Ali Vardi Khan set himself up as an independent ruler in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Nizam-ul-Mulk made himself independent in the Deccan. Saadat Khan Burhan-ul Mulk made himself independent in Oudh. Nadir Shah also invaded India in 1739.

According to Rustam Ali, author of **Tarikhi Hind**, "This prince (Muhammad Shah) was a lover of pleasures and indolence, negligent of political duties, and addicted to loose habits, but of a somewhat generous disposition. He was entirely careless regarding his subjects.....In a short time, many of the officers of the kingdom put out their feet from the path of obedience to the sovereign, and many of the infidels, rebels, tyrants and enemies stretched out the hands of rapacity and extortion upon the weaker tributaries and the poor subjects." According to Keene, "Students of history will note his reign as the period in which were founded all the modern powers of the Indian peninsula. It seemed as though the Empire like some of the lower animals was about to reproduce its life by fissiparous generation." According to the Siyr-ul-Mutakherin, "The

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1. According to Khafi Khan, "After the accession of Mohammad Shah, letters were sent by him and by his mother, Maryam Makani, through the medium of Itmad-ud-Daulah Mohammad Amin Khan to Nizam-ul-Mulk, informing him that the constraint used by the Sayyids was so strict that he had no power of giving orders; that the Sayyids in their futile scheming proposed, after settling the affairs of Neku-Siyar and Giridhar, to get rid of Nizam-ul-Mulk, and then to do as they pleased; and that Muhammad Shah and his mother had full confidence in Nizam-ul-Mulk that he would not fill in the loyalty which his ancestors had ever exhibited."

foundations of the Delhi monarchy were really rotten, but Muhammad Shah by his cleverness kept them standing. He may be called the last of the rulers of Babur's line, as after him kingship had nothing but the name left to it."

#### Nadir Shah's invasion (1739)

Nadir Shah, "Napoleon of Iran", was born in a humble family. He was brought up in the hard school of privation. He came to the forefront when he freed his country in 1732 from Shah Tahmasp. He himself usurped power in 1736 and became the ruler of Persia. According to Irvine, "Nadir Shah was no mere soldier, no savage leader of savage horde, but a master of diplomacy and statecraft as well as of the sword. The profoundness of his diplomacy was no less remarkable than the greatness of his generalship in war, and the wisdom of his policy to the vanquished after his victories in the field." He attacked India in 1739. The invasion was due to many causes. Muhammad Shah, the Mughal Emperor, had given a promise to Nadir Shah that he will not give refuge to fugitives from Persia. In spite of that promise, shelter was given to the Persians. When Nadir Shah complained of it, his envoy was detained. The wealth of India and the weakness of the Mughal Government were also partly responsible for Nadir's invasion.

Nadir Shah entered northern Afghanistan in May 1738. Ghazni was captured in the same month. Kabul was occupied in June. Jalalabad was captured in September. Peshawar surrendered in November. Lahore fell in January 1739. Anandram Mukhlis writes thus in his *Tazkira*, "Nadir Shah was now in possession of all the country as far as Attock, and Muhammad Shah and his advisers could no longer remain blind to the danger that threatened them. They understood that this was no ordinary foe against whom they had to contend, no mere plunderer who could be saved with the spoils of a province and then return to his own country, but a leader of unshakable resolution who shaped his course with his sword..... How to relate the ruin and desolation that overwhelmed this beautiful country! Wazirabad, Imanabad and Gujrat towns which for population may almost be called cities, were levelled with the earth. Nothing was respected, no sort of violence remained unpractised; property of all kinds became the spoil of the plunderer, and women the prey of the ravisher."

A battle was fought in February 1739 between the Mughal troops and those of Nadir Shah near Karnal<sup>1</sup> and the latter was

1. About the battle of Karnal, Dr. Satish Chandra says: "The disaster which befell Mughal arms at Karnal was not the result of any organised treachery, but was due to the want of daring, imagination, and unity on the part of the Mughal nobles against one of the greatest generals of the age in Asia. No attempt was made by the Mughal court to aid and assist the Governor of Kabul to withstand Nadir Shah. Nor were the passes into India defended. According to some writers, the Delhi court seems to have imagined that Nadir Shah would turn back after the conquest of Kabul (June 1737). Khan-i-Dauran was among those who poohed most vigorously the alleged threat of a Persian invasion. Perhaps, a more plausible explanation would be that the court was watching the outcome of the conflict between Nizam-ul-Mulk and the Marathas, and awaiting the return of Nizam-ul-Mulk's armies to Delhi." (*Party and Politics at the Mughal Court*, Pp. 249-50)

successful. Khan Dauran, Amir-ul-Umara, died fighting. Before death, he gave the following warning : "Never take the Emperor to Nadir, nor conduct Nadir to Delhi, but send away that evil from this point by any means that you can devise."

Although Nizam-ul-Mulk was able to persuade Nadir Shah to go back after receiving Rs. 50 lakhs, Saadat Khan (Burhan-ul-Mulk) who was the enemy of Nizam-ul-Mulk, prevailed upon Nadir to capture the Mughal Emperor and Nizam-ul-Mulk and secure a bigger booty by going to Delhi. Nadir Shah addressed Muhammad Shah in these words : "Only as your indolence and pride have obliged me to march so far, and I have been put to an extraordinary expense; and my men on account of the long marches, are much fatigued and in want of necessaries, I must go to Delhi and there continue for some days until the army is refreshed and the **Peshkash** (tribute) of 50 lakhs promised by the Nizam is made good to me. After that I shall leave you to look after your own affairs."

Nadir Shah marched to Delhi where the Khutba was read in his name in the mosques of the capital. Unfortunately, rumour was spread that Nadir Shah was dead and the inhabitants of Delhi attacked and murdered a few Persian soldiers. To quote Anandram, "On the morning of Sunday, 11th March 1739, an order went forth from the Persian Emperor for the slaughter of the inhabitants. The result may be imagined. One moment would seem to have sufficed for universal destruction. The Chandni Chowk, the fruit market, the Dariba Bazar, and the buildings around the Masjid-i Jama were set to fire and reduced to ashes. The inhabitants, one and all, were slaughtered. Here and there some opposition was offered, but in most places people were butchered unresistingly. The Persians laid violent hands on everything and everybody; cloth, jewels, dishes, of gold and silver, were all acceptable spoil. The author beheld these horrors from his mansion situated in the Vakilpur Muhalla outside the city, resolved to fight to the last if necessary, and with the help of God to fall at last with honour." "All the regal jewels and property and the contents of the treasury, were seized by the Persian conqueror in the citadel. He thus became possessed of treasure to the amount of 60 lakhs of rupees and several thousand Ashrafs; plates of gold to the value of one crore of rupees, and the jewels, many of which were unrivalled in beauty by any in the world, were valued at about 50 crores. The Peacock Throne alone, constructed at great pains in the reign of Shah Jahan, had cost one crore of rupees. Elephants, horses and precious stuffs, whatever pleased the conqueror's eye, more indeed than can be enumerated, became his spoil. In short, the accumulated wealth of 348 years changed masters in a moment."

Nadir Shah left Delhi after a stay of 57 days. Before his departure, he put the crown on the head of Muhammad Shah and the latter declared thus on that occasion : "As the generosity of the Shah-in-Shah has made me a second time master of a crown and a throne and exalted me among the crowned heads of the world, I beg to offer him as my tribute the provinces of my Empire,

west of the river Indus, from Kashmir to Sindh, and in addition the Subahs of Thatta and the forts subordinate to it."

Nadir Shah gave the following advice to the Mughal Emperor ; "In the first place, you must seize all the **Omras'** Jagirs, and pay each of them, according to his **mansab** and rank, with ready money out of the treasury. You are to allow none to keep any force of his own, but you yourself are constantly to keep 60,000 chosen horsemen, at sixty rupees per month ; every ten men to have **dehbashi** (officer over ten men), every ten **dehbashis** one **sudival** (officer over 100), and over every ten **sudivals** one **hazari**. You ought to be well acquainted with the merits of each : his name, family and nation (race), not allowing any of them—officers, soldiers or others—to be idle or inactive ; (and) when an occasion may require, despatch a sufficient number, under the command of one whom you can trust for conduct, courage and fidelity, and when that business is over, recall them immediately, not letting any person to stay too long in command for fear of bad consequences. You are more particularly to beware of Nizam-ul-Mulk, whom by his conduct, I find to be full of cunning and self-interest and more ambitious than become a subject."

According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "His (Nadir Shah's) departure left Muhammad Shah and his courtiers stupefied with the blow which had fallen on them. For two months nothing was done or proposed in regard to the state of affairs in the empire. Even this blow could not awaken from the heavy sleep of security and the lethargy of indolence, people who were so intoxicated with the wine of pride and self-conceit. They agreed only in ill-will to each other. It was not until November that the emperor and his courtiers could summon up energy for active intrigue."<sup>1</sup>

As regards the results of Nadir Shah's invasion, it cannot be denied that it gave a death-blow to the Mughal Empire and hastened its fall. Nadir Shah's invasion exposed the weakness and rottenness of the Mughal Empire. No wonder, the Afghans from the North-West were encouraged to invade India in large numbers. This explains the large number of invasions of India after 1739. The prestige of the Mughal Empire was gone. Hopeless confusion prevailed everywhere. Kabul, Sindh and Western Punjab were lost completely to the Mughal Empire. Muhammad Shah had to marry his daughter to Nadir Shah's youngest son. Nadir Shah was killed in 1747.

About the effects of Nadir Shah's invasion of India, Dr. Satish Chandra says : "The effects of Nadir Shah's invasion continued to be felt long after his departure. The invasion proclaimed the real weakness of the Mughal Empire to the entire world, particularly to the European adventurers who were gradually extending their commercial activities from the coastal regions of India and were watching the political situation in the country with keen interest.

"The invasion of Nadir Shah demonstrated forcefully that a new political situation had been created in North India. The loss of Kabul and the areas to the west of the Indus deprived India of an advance post for the country's defence and a vantage point for following West Asian affairs. All the Indian powers including the Marathas were made painfully aware that a new force had arisen in West Asia and that Indians could no longer bank on her North-West regions being safe from recurrent foreign invasions. Whether these invasions would be in the nature of plundering raids only, or would aim also at the creation of a new dynastic empire remained to be seen.

"The incipient threat of further invasions from the North-West led Baji Rao to postulate a new approach to the Mughal Empire, visualising a united front of all Indian powers under the aegis of the Emperor, with the Marathas playing the leading part in the coalition. The parties at the Mughal Court were also affected by Nadir Shah's invasion. Among the old leaders, Saadat Khan and Khan-i-Dauran died, while Nizam-ul-Mulk and Qamar-ud-Din Khan forfeited the confidence of the Emperor for their sorry part in the battle of Karnal. Nizam-ul-Mulk decided once again to leave the Mughal court to its devices and sought an agreement with the Marathas for maintaining his position in the Deccan. Safdar Jang, Amir Khan, and a number of other nobles gradually rose in the Emperor's favour. The decline in the imperial prestige led to a resumption of the old struggle for Wizarat, with the important difference that the issue now was no longer one of revivifying the empire by internal reforms and new policies, but of preventing the Emperor from falling under the domination of either one or another of the 'power' contending for mastery in North India.

"The wealth extorted by Nadir Shah from the Emperor, his nobles, the commercial classes, and the citizens of Delhi represented a big drain on the resources of the country. It not only dealt a crippling blow to the power and authority of the Emperor who was left with no cash reserves for an emergency, but affected also the position of Delhi as one of the prime commercial marts of North India. The general impoverishment of the nobles led to a sharpening of the struggle for the possession of jagirs. Simultaneously, the tendency towards the rack-renting of the peasantry became more marked. The realisation of land-revenue, never a peaceful affair, became more and more a kind of military operation in the course of which villages were devastated and large number of peasants were massacred.

"Thus the various internal problems of the Empire were intensified.

"Nadir Shah's invasion also led to the introduction of the quick-firing musket and improved light artillery in India. Characteristically, the Rohilla Afghans were the first to adopt them, while the Marathas adhered to their traditional mode of light-cavalry warfare—an omission for which they were to pay dearly.

"Finally, the rise of Nadir Shah and his invasion of India ended the close cultural contact between India and Persia which had

subsisted during the two preceding centuries. The Indian frontier no longer marched with Iran and Turan so that the flow of adventurers from these countries into India finally stopped. While it is doubtful if this had any important bearing on the fate of the Mughal empire which was tottering to its death due to deep-seated problems to which no satisfactory solution was forthcoming, it had an indirect bearing on Indian social and cultural development. The Irani and Turani immigrants who had settled down in India now found it even more difficult to stand aside as a separate cultural and social group, or to adopt an attitude of social and cultural superiority. Thus, the forces making for the creation of a composite culture and society in the country were strengthened in the long run." (*Party and Politics at the Mughal Court*, pp. 254-56).

### **Invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali**

Ahmad Shah Abdali or Durrani was an important General of Nadir Shah who is said to have paid him a tribute in these words: "I have not found in Iran, Turan or Hind any man equal to Ahmad Shah in capacity and character." Ahmad Shah was originally known as Ahmad Khan. He was an Afghan by birth. When after the conquest of Qandhar, Nadir Shah decided to settle all his Abdali subjects there, the relatives of Ahmad Khan also settled there. After the murder of Nadir Shah, all the Afghans proceeded towards Qandhar and chose Ahmad Khan as a leader and began to address him as Ahmad Shah. On reaching Qandhar, they had to fight against the local garrison but they were able to capture it. Ahmad Shah was declared emperor and coins were issued in his name. After Qandhar, Ahmad Shah occupied Ghazni, Kabul and Peshawar. All that added to his personal glory and the morale of his troops. He crossed the Indus and the Jhelum to invade the Punjab in 1748. Lahore and Sarhind were occupied but he was defeated by the Mughal army near Sarhind and he was forced to withdraw. Ahmad Shah was not prepared to put up with the insult and, therefore, he led another attack on India in 1749. At that time, Muin Khan was the Governor of the Punjab. He resisted the advance of Abdali and asked for reinforcements. As he did not get any help, he agreed to pay Rs. 14,000 as annual tribute to Abdali. Abdali attacked India once again in 1751. He demanded the surrender of Lahore and Multan from the Mughal Emperor and the latter had to submit to the demand as he was powerless. Abdali also conquered Kashmir and appointed a Governor to carry on his Government. He had to go back because there was a possibility of opposition at that time. However, he was able to secure Rs. 50 lakhs a year as income from the Punjab.

Abdali had left the Government of the Punjab in the hands of Muin Khan. After the death of Muin Khan, his son was appointed Governor of the Punjab and his wife Mughlani Begum was appointed the regent of the boy-Governor. As the affairs of the Punjab were mis-managed by Mughlani Begum, there was lawlessness everywhere. The Sikhs became active. Abdali sent an army to set things right in the Punjab but when that failed,

he himself started for India in November, 1756. Lahore and Sarhind were occupied. Mughlani Begum threw in her lot with him. The Raja of Kashmir agreed to pay tribute. The Mughal Emperor could not resist Abdali and the latter entered Delhi. Acting on the information given by Mughlani Begum, Abdali was able to get a lot of money and beautiful young women. The Mughal Emperor was turned out of his palace and was lodged in some broken buildings. His daughter was married to Timur Shah, son of Ahmad Shah Abdali. Abdali himself married Mohammad Shah's young daughter. Abdali also led a raid to Mathura, Mahaban and Gokal and plundered everything that fell into his hands. He went back to his country with an immense booty laden on 28 thousand mules and camels. Before his departure from Delhi, Ahmad Shah compelled the Mughal Emperor to cede to him Kashmir, Lahore, Sarhind and Multan. He appointed his son Timur Shah to supervise the Governments of these regions. Mughlani Begum was not given Kashmir or Jullundur Doab which had been promised to her. When the Begum failed to pay the dues of a person for whom she had stood surety, she was imprisoned, caned and disgraced. Ahmad Shah appointed Najib Khan Rohilla as Mir Bakhshi and he remained in Delhi as the agent of Ahmad Shah. After the departure of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the situation in India became critical. Najib Khan was forced to leave Delhi along with all his men and Ahmad Bangash was appointed as Mir Bakhshi in his place. Najib Khan complained to Abdali and asked for a fresh invasion by him. Sarhind and Lahore fell into the hands of the Marathas in 1758. This was too much for Abdali. He sent Jahan Khan to the Punjab but when he was defeated, Abdali himself attacked India. The Marathas could not stand against him and they were forced to withdraw from Lahore, Multan and Sarhind. Thus, towards the end of 1759, the Punjab was once again brought under his control by Ahmad Shah Abdali.

Ahmad Shah was full of anger against all those who had dared to defy his authority. He rushed to the Doab. He fought against Datta Singh Sindhia and defeated and killed him. Malhar Rao was able to escape with great difficulty from the hands of Abdali. The Peshwa also took up the challenge of Abdali and sent Sadashiva Rao Bhau to the North in 1760. Many other Maratha Generals of repute were sent to the North to fight against Abdali.

Ahmad Shah had no desire to establish direct Government over India. He merely wanted to keep under his control the Punjab, Sindh and Kabul. He did not want to destroy the power of the Marathas. What he wanted was that the Marathas should come to a definite and permanent understanding with the Mughal Emperor so that Northern India may have peace and taxes may be regularly collected. With that object in view, Ahmad Shah started negotiations with the Marathas. If the Peshwa had accepted the advice of Sadashiva Rao Bhau, there would have been a compromise but the Peshwa was keen over having his

control over Delhi and the Punjab. In these circumstances war between the Marathas and Ahmad Shah Abdali became inevitable.

If the finances of the Marathas had been sound, it might have been possible for them to win victory. The Maratha occupation of Delhi had raised their credit in the eyes of the people. Abdali could not have lived in India for an indefinite period and would have been forced to withdraw. There was every possibility of the Rajputs and Jats joining hands with the Marathas. However, the financial bankruptcy of the Marathas forced them to come out of Delhi. It was under these circumstances that the Third Battle of Panipat was fought in January 1761. The Marathas were defeated in spite of their hard fighting. Ahmad Shah did not follow up his victory and he returned to his capital after nominating Shah Alam as Emperor and Imad-ul-Mulk as Wazir.

In 1766, Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded the Punjab and ordered Najib-ud-Daula to wait on him. On account of the rising of the Sikhs, Ahmad Shah was forced to retire.

#### **Ahmed Shah (1748-54)**

After the death of Muhammad Shah in April 1748, Ahmed Shah was placed on the Delhi throne. At the time of his accession to throne, he was a youngman of 21 and had practically no experience in the field of administration. He lacked qualities of leadership. He was "vicious, dissipated, perfidious, pusillanimous and utterly worthless." He favoured Javid Khan, his chief eunuch, who was allowed to become the leader of the court party which was "a cabal of women and eunuchs." Javid Khan came to be known as Nawab Bahadur and he dominated the whole of the administration. Javid Khan plotted against Safdarjung, the Wazir. No wonder, utter confusion prevailed in the administration.

In 1749, Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded the Punjab but retired on getting a heavy indemnity. In 1752, he invaded the Punjab again. The Governor of the Punjab was defeated and Ahmad Shah marched towards Delhi. With a view to avoid the destruction at Delhi, the Mughal Emperor made peace by ceding the Punjab and Multan to Ahmad Shah.

The courtiers of Ahmed Shah openly declared thus: "The Emperor has shown his unfitness for rule; he is unable to cope with the Marathas; he is false and fickle towards his friends. Let him be deposed and a worthy son of the house of Timur raised to the throne." He was blinded and imprisoned.

#### **Alamgir II (1754-59)**

After the deposition of Ahmed Shah, Azizud-Din, the second son of Jahandar Shah, was put on the throne. He took up the title of Alamgir II, the World Grasper. At the time of his acces-

sion to the throne, he was 55. As he had spent almost all his life in prison, he had practically no experience of administration and fighting. He loved books of history, said his prayers regularly and disliked pleasures. However, he was a very weak person and lacked the qualities which were necessary at that time. He was a puppet in the hands of his wazir, Imad-ul-Mulk. The wazir was a man of no principle. He was extremely selfish. He put all the royal revenues into his own pocket and starved the royal family. He persecuted Ali Gauhar, the eldest son of the Mughal Emperor. Imad-ul-Mulk tried to form an anti-Maratha coalition with a view to drive out the Marathas from Northern India. However, he failed in his enterprise and the Marathas became stronger than before and he had to depend upon them.

The relations between Alamgir II and his wazir Imad-ul-Mulk were far from satisfactory. Imad-ul-Mulk got him assassinated in November 1759.<sup>1</sup> Muhi-ul-Millat, grandson of Kam Baksh, was made the Emperor with the title of Shah Jahan III. At the same time, Ali Gauhar, the son of Alamgir III, declared himself Emperor and took up the title of Shah Alam II.

In 1758, a large number of Sikhs assembled under Jassa Singh Kalal and succeeded in capturing Lahore. New coins were struck bearing the inscription "coined by the grace of Khalsa in the country of Ahmed, conquered by Jassa, the Kalal." However, the Sikhs vacated Lahore in 1759 when Ahmad Shah Abdali came. In spite of this, the Sikh leaders remained in possession of large districts in the Punjab. The Sikhs again besieged Lahore and compelled Kabuli Mal, Governor of Ahmed Shah, to hand over to them the town and the fortress.

### Shah Alam II (1759-1806)

Ali Gauhar was in Bihar at the time of his father's death. Taking into consideration the state of affairs at Delhi, Ali Gauhar who had become Shah Alam, did not venture to proceed to Delhi for 12 years. He reached Delhi in January 1772 and that also with the help of the Marathas. From 1760 to 1771, Shah Alam was under the control of the English. During this period, he tried to conquer Bihar and Bengal, but failed. In 1764 he was defeated in the Battle of Buxar and taken prisoner. In 1765 he gave the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the English East India Company and the latter promised to pay him an annual tribute of Rs. 26 lakhs. The English Company recognised Shah Alam as the Mughal Emperor. In spite of the fact that Shah Alam had a lot of money, he was not satisfied with his position because he was frequently insulted by the English. No wonder he was anxious to go to Delhi. He also got messages from Delhi that he must come at once to save the honour of the royal family. This happened in January 1772.

1. His body was thrown out of the window and was lying stark naked on the banks of the Jumna. Later on, it was picked up and buried in Humayun's tomb.

Throughout his long reign, Shah Alam remained a puppet in the hands of the ministers and the Marathas. He was blinded in 1788 and died in 1806. He had to go through many ups and downs of life. Delhi was captured in 1803 by Lake and Shah Alam became pensioner of the British.

### **Akbar II (1806-37)**

After the death of Shah Alam II, his son succeeded him as Mughal Emperor. Like his father, he was also a pensioner of the British. He was the head of the royal establishment in the Red Fort of Delhi and enjoyed the imperial title only by courtesy. He died in 1837.

### **Bahadur Shah II (1837-57)**

After the death of Akbar II, Bahadur Shah II was allowed to retain the imperial title. However, he took part in the mutiny of 1857. He was tried by the British and deported to Rangoon where he died in 1862. Thus ended the Mughal dynasty.

### **Causes of the downfall of the Mughals**

Regarding the downfall of the Mughal Empire, Lane-Poole observes: "As some imperial corpse, preserved for ages in its dread seclusion, crowned and armed and still majestic, yet falls to dust at the mere breath of heaven, so fell the empire of the Mughals when the great name that guarded it was no more." According to Dr. V.A. Smith, "The collapse of the Empire came with a suddenness which at first sight may seem surprising. But the student who has acquired even a moderately sound knowledge of history will be surprised that the Empire lasted so long rather than because it collapsed suddenly."

(1) It is desirable to refer to some of the important causes of the downfall of the Mughal Empire. The most important cause was the religious policy of Aurangzeb. He alienated the sympathy and support of the Hindus by committing all kinds of atrocities on them. He imposed **Jizya** on all the Hindus in the country. Even the Rajputs and Brahmins were not spared. He dismissed the Hindu officials from the state service and allowed only those to continue who were prepared to accept Islam. He carried out a systematic demolition of the temples of the Hindus. Thousands of artisans and labourers were employed to pull down all the Hindu temples and with their material mosques were built. This must have been a little too much for the Hindus to put up with. No wonder, the revolt of the Satnamis took place. After the death of Raja Jaswant Singh, Aurangzeb tried to bring up his sons as Muslims. The brave Rajputs could not tolerate such an insult. Durga Dass managed to remove the sons and their mother to Rajputana in spite of all the precautions taken by the Mughal Government. That led to the Rajput War which continued from 1679 to 1681. Although peace was made, Aurangzeb could not depend upon them. It proved to be a great handi-

cap for him when he was busy in his Deccan Wars. Instead of depending upon the support of the Rajputs, he had to set apart Mughal forces to meet any possible trouble from their side. The execution of Guru Teg Bahadur was also a blunder. This led to the alienation of the Sikhs who became a strong military power under Guru Gobind Singh. Later on, these very Sikhs gave trouble to the Mughal Emperors. Although Banda was captured and put to death after a long resistance, the Sikh power was not crushed. It kept on growing day by day and ultimately the Sikhs were able to oust the Mughals from the Punjab. The same policy of religious persecution led to the rise of the Marathas under Shivaji. The persecution of Hindus hardened their character and they became the bitter enemies of the Mughals. According to Lane Poole, "His mistaken policy towards Shivaji provided the foundation of a power that was to prove a successful rival to his own empire."

(2) The Deccan policy of Aurangzeb was also partly responsible for the downfall of the Mughal Empire. Aurangzeb was bent upon crushing the power of the Marathas. He found that the States of Bijapur and Golconda were a source of help to the Marathas. The Marathas were employed in large numbers in these States. They occupied important places of trust and authority in civil administration. Maratha soldiers were welcomed in these states. Thus, they got not only military training and experience, but also money. Aurangzeb felt that if these states were annexed, the source of the strength of the Marathas will be stopped. Moreover, the rulers of these States were Shias and for a fanatical Sunni like Aurangzeb, there was no place for them in India. The Marathas were able to get a lot of booty by raiding these States. It was felt that if these States were annexed, it will not be easy for the Marathas to gain anything because they shall have to fight against the might of the Mughal Empire. With that object in mind, Aurangzeb himself went to the Deccan and annexed Bijapur and Golconda in 1686 and 1687 respectively. He might have claimed credit for the destruction of the Shia States, but he had committed a great blunder in doing so. He should have followed a buffer-state policy towards these kingdoms. He should have subordinated his religious zeal to statesmanship. If he had helped these States against the Marathas, he would have been able to keep the latter in check with much less expense and waste of energy.

After the annexation of Bijapur and Golconda, Aurangzeb tried to crush the power of the Marathas. Sambhaji, the son of Shivaji, was captured and put to death. His son, Sahu, was also captured and made a prisoner. He continued in Mughal custody up to 1707. However, the Marathas carried on their struggle against the Mughals under the leadership of Raja Ram and Tara Bai. When Aurangzeb died in 1707, the power of the Marathas was still not crushed. They were stronger than before.

According to Dr. Smith, "*The Deccan was the grave of his reputation as well as of his body.*" Aurangzeb had to remain away from the capital for a quarter of a century. The result was

that the whole of the administration went out of gear. There was confusion everywhere. As the Emperor was busy in the Deccan, the provincial governors did not send the land revenue to Central Government. At a time when more money was required for the Deccan War, very little was coming from the provinces. No wonder, when Bahadur Shah succeeded to the throne, the treasury was empty. Moreover, the Mughal Government being a centralised despotism, the absence of the Emperor from the North for a long time encouraged centrifugal tendencies among the governors. After the death of Aurangzeb, these tendencies continued to grow, and the result was that ultimately various provinces became independent of the central authority. Oudh became independent under Saadat Khan. Bengal, Bihar and Orissa became independent under Alivardi Khan. Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-Mulk became independent in the Deccan. The Rohillas became independent in Rohilkhand. The Rajputs also asserted their independence. Thus, gradually, the Mughal Empire broke up. The failure of Aurangzeb in the Deccan Wars destroyed the military prestige of the Mughals. Too much of expenditure made the Mughal Government bankrupt. The Deccan War can rightly be called the ulcer which destroyed the Mughal Empire.

(3) Aurangzeb was a man of suspicious temperament. He did not trust even his own sons. The result was that whenever he sent an expedition, he put two persons in charge of the same. The object was to put a check on the power of both. But that led to the division of responsibility. That was absolutely suicidal from the point of view of efficiency and success.

(3A) Another cause of the downfall of the Mughal Empire was the revolts in the various provinces of the Empire. During the reign of Aurangzeb, no provincial Governor could dare to defy his authority. However, there were many who were secretly hostile to him. They were all trying to build up reserves of power and secure such allies as could help them to realize their ambitions when the aged emperor passed away. All the sons of Aurangzeb fell into this category. Among officers in the Deccan, Bahadur Khan, Diler Khan and Zulfiqar Khan were all suspected of harbouring such motives. After the death of Aurangzeb, the empire began to break up and the process of breaking up was rather rapid.

Zulfiqar Khan had been dreaming of setting up an independent kingdom for himself after his conquest of the fort of Jinji. In 1708, he was appointed the Viceroy of the Deccan. He was allowed to stay at the capital and Daud Khan was allowed to act as his deputy in the Deccan. When Farrukhsiyar came to power, the position of Zulfiqar Khan became shaky and ultimately he was killed. Chingilich Khan was appointed Viceroy of the Deccan. He was given the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk. He acted as a Viceroy in the Deccan from 1713 to 1715. He consolidated his position by diplomacy and war. However, he was displaced by Husain Ali who was appointed Viceroy of the Deccan. In 1720, the Nizam returned to the Deccan and seized the Viceroyalty by defeating Husain Ali's nephew. As Emperor Ahmad Shah was himself eager to break the power of the Sayyads, he won

over the Nizam to his own side and confirmed him as the Viceroy of the Deccan. The Nizam had to go to the north because the Emperor wanted to stabilise his position by appointing him as the Wazir. The Nizam was able to secure for himself Malwa and Gujarat. When he found that he was not liked in the court, he marched away to the Deccan without waiting for the permission of the Emperor. This was not liked by the Emperor who appointed Mubariz Khan as the Viceroy of the Deccan and directed him to send the Nizam to the court dead or alive. Mubariz Khan was defeated and killed by the Nizam who sent his head to the Emperor. The Mughal Emperor was obliged to confer on the Nizam the title of Asafjah and he also confirmed him in the Viceroyalty of the Deccan in 1725. In spite of the fact that the Nizam was very strong in the Deccan, he kept up the show of respecting the wishes of the Emperor. When the Marathas occupied Malwa, Bundhelkhand and Gujarat, he stayed in the North from 1737 to 1740 at the request of the Mughal Emperor. He went back to the South in 1740 and spent the rest of his life in consolidating his position in the Deccan. Thus the Nizam was able to set up a separate kingdom for himself in the Deccan.

Likewise, Murshid Quli Khan established an independent kingdom in Bengal. Murshid Quli was the Deputy Governor and Diwan of Bengal and Orissa under Prince Azim. Shortly before the death of Aurangzeb, Azim left the province in the hands of Murshid Quli and after the coronation of his father he stayed away at the capital. During this period, all power rested in the hands of Murshid Quli. In 1713, Farrukhsiyar appointed Murshid Quli as permanent Nizam or Governor of Bengal. In 1719, he was also appointed the Nazim of Orissa. Murshid Quli was a very capable person and he did a lot for the good of the people. In 1727, he was succeeded by his son-in-law, Shuja-ud Din. In 1733, Shuja-ud-Din was appointed the Governor of Bihar also. The result was that the successors of Murshid Quli acquired hereditary authority over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The Mughal Emperor did not exercise his right of appointing anybody as the Nazim or the Diwan of Bengal, Bihar or Orissa. The most that he did was to grant his approval to whosoever succeeded to the Nawabship of this region by issuing a farman in his favour in consideration of a money payment. When Shuja-ud-Din died in 1739, he was succeeded by his son, Sarfraz Khan. In 1740, Ali Vardi Khan revolted and captured power in Bengal by putting Sarfraz Khan to death. He was confirmed as the Governor of Bengal by the Mughal Emperor after accepting a present of Rs. 2 crores. In 1746, the Mughal Emperor ordered Ali Vardi Khan to send some money but the latter did not bother about the order. It shows that Bengal, Bihar and Orissa had become practically independent and the Mughal Emperor had no control over them.

Burhan-ul-Mulk Saadat Khan founded an independent Muslim kingdom in Avadh. The original name of Saadat Khan was Mohammad Amin. He was a descendant of the Sayyads of Nishapur and a follower of the Shia faith. To begin with he was a member of the personal retainers of the Emperor called Bala-

shahi. He was given the Mansab of 5,000 and later on of 7,000. The title of Burhan-ul-Mulk was also conferred on him. He was appointed the Governor of Agra. In 1723, he was driven out of the capital as a sort of punishment and was given the governorship of Avadh. Saadat Khan was in favour of strong measures against the Marathas. He fought against Nadir Shah on behalf of the Emperor in the battle of Karnal. However, by his treachery, he brought Nadir Shah to Delhi in order to discredit the Nizam. Nadir Shah got dissatisfied with Saadat Khan and the latter poisoned himself to death. Saadat Khan ruled Avadh from 1723 to 1739. He was succeeded by Safdarjung who was a gifted leader and a bold commander. He fought a number of battles and maintained the appearance of subordination to the Emperor. In 1748, he got the office of the Wazir and thus the ruling members of his family came to be known as Nawab Wazirs. Safdarjung tried to build up an army of excellent soldiers. One of his regiments consisted of Persian Turks. Originally, they were 7,000 but later on their number rose to 20,000. Safdarjung had to fight against the Jats, Rohillas and the Marathas. After his death in 1754, Shuja-ud-daula became the Nawab Wazir of Avadh.

The Bangashes of Farrukhabad set up an independent kingdom in the region between the kingdom of Avadh and the Mughal capital. This was done under the leadership of Mohammad Khan. The latter raised a band of Afghans whom he employed in plundering raids and in fighting the battles of local Jagirdars on payment. In 1713, he was appointed a courtier by Farrukhsiyar. In 1714, he founded the town of Farrukhabad. He was able to acquire a large Jagir which extended from Aligarh to the south-eastern limit of Kanpur district. Its area was about 7,500 sq. miles. His influence became so great that he was appointed Governor of Allahabad and Malwa. He was so faithful to the Emperor that he never thought of independence. This fact is testified by Nadir Shah who says that although he received invitations from all principal nobles, he received none from Mohammad Khan Bangash. When he died in 1743, he was succeeded by his son Qayam Khan.

Another stronghold of the Afghans was Katehar. It was populated mainly by the Rohillas and hence it came to be known as **Rohilkhand**. The Rohillas first came into prominence under Daud who continued to be a petty Jagirdar. His adopted son Ali Mohammad Khan Rohilla became leader of the Rohillas in 1721 and he was responsible for the foundation of an independent kingdom of the Rohillas. He was able to raise an army of his own and he started conquering district after district. In 1727, he defeated a Khwajasara of the Emperor and seized all his property. This raised his prestige and he took up the title of Nawab. He started living in royal style and held his court like an independent prince. He was able to get the right of collecting taxes from the region under his authority. In 1737, he got the title of Nawab from the Emperor. When Nadir Shah attacked India in 1739, Ali Mohammad Khan extended his influence to Muradabad and occupied most of the region included in

that Sarkar. Raja Harnand Arora led an army against him but he himself was defeated and killed. That also added to the prestige and wealth of Ali Mohammad. His authority extended to the whole of Bareilly and Muradabad and portions of Hardoi and Badaun. Ali Mohammad was appointed the Governor of Katehar by the Emperor. In due course, he was able to occupy Pilibhit, Bijnor and Kumaon. In 1745, the Mughal Emperor personally led an army against Ali Mohammad and the latter submitted. He was given a Mansab of 4,000 and he also agreed to exchange Sarhind for Katehar. When Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded the Punjab in 1748, Ali Mohammad went back to Katehar and drove out the local Jagirdars. After his death, his possessions were divided into three parts, to one of which Hafiz Rahmat Khan succeeded as the leader. The Rohillas helped Ahmed Shah Abdali in the third battle of Panipat in 1761 and got many concessions from him. After that, the Rohillas became independent. For some time, they were able to capture Delhi also. But they had to vacate on account of opposition from the Marathas and the Nawab of Avadh.

(4) The weak successors of Aurangzeb were also responsible for the downfall of the Mughal Empire. If they had been intelligent and brilliant, they could have stopped the decline that set in the time of Aurangzeb. Unfortunately, all of them were worthless. They were busy in their luxuries and intrigues and did nothing to remedy the evils that had crept into the Mughal polity. No wonder, Mughal Empire continued to decline and ultimately fell.

(5) Another cause of Mughal downfall was the gradual deterioration in the character of the Mughal kings. It is stated that when Babur attacked India, he swam all the rivers on the way. He was so strong that he could run on the wall of a fort while carrying men in his arms. Humayun and Akbar also possessed very hard characters. Unmindful of the difficulties that he had to encounter, Humayun was able to win back his throne after the lapse of many years. The same hardy character enabled Akbar to conquer the whole of Northern India and a part of the Deccan. No amount of riding on horse-back exhausted him. He could walk miles and miles on foot. He could kill a lion with one stroke of his sword. After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperors became ease-loving and cowardly. They went about in palanquins and were hardly fit to rule a country where the mass of the people detested the Mughal rule.

According to S. R. Sharma, "Kam Baksh, as a captive on his death-bed, regretted that a descendant of Timur was captured alive. But Jahandar Shah and Ahmad Shah were not ashamed to be caught up in the tresses of their concubines who came between them and their duties as Emperors :

They looked on beauty

And turned away from duty !

The former fooled himself in public with his Lal Kunwar ; and the latter buried himself in his seraglio—which extended over four square miles—for weeks together without seeing the face of male !"

(6) Not only the Mughal Emperors degenerated, the same was the case with the Mughal nobility. When the Mughals came to India, they had a hardy character. Too much of wealth, luxury and leisure softened their character. Their harems became full. They got wine in plenty. They went in palanquins to the battlefield. Such nobles were not fit to fight against the Marathas, the Rajputs and the Sikhs. The Mughal nobility degenerated at a very rapid pace. According to Sir J. N. Sarkar, no Mughal noble family retained its importance for more than one or two generations. If the achievements of a noble man were mentioned in three pages, the achievements of his son occupied nearly a page and the grandson was dismissed in a few lines such as "he did nothing worthy of being recorded here."<sup>1</sup> The Mughal nobility was taken from the Turks, the Afghans and the Persians and the climate of India was not very suitable for their growth. They began to degenerate during their stay in India.

According to Sarkar, "All the surplus produce of a fertile land under a most bounteous Providence was swept into the coffers of the Mughal nobility and pampered them in a degree of luxury not dreamt of even by kings in Persia or Central Asia. Hence, in the houses of the Delhi nobility, luxury was carried to an excess. The harems of many of them were filled with immense number of women of an infinite variety of races, intellect and character. Under Muslim Law the sons of concubines are entitled to their patrimony equally with sons born in wedlock, and they occupy no inferior position in society. Even the sons of lawfully married wives became, at a precocious age, familiar with vice from what they saw and heard in the harem, while their mothers were insulted by the higher splendour and influence enjoyed in the same household by younger and fairer rivals of servile origin or easier virtue. The proud spirit and majestic dignity of a Cornelia are impossible in the crowded harem of a polygamist and without Cornelias among the mothers there cannot be Gracchi among the sons."

Where wealth accumulates men decay ;  
And disloyalty on the Empire did prey.

Reference may also be made to the moral degeneration among the Mughal nobles. "In a mean spirit of jealousy, they insulted and thwarted 'new men' drawn from the ranks and ennobled for the most brilliant public services, and yet they themselves had grown utterly worthless. We have a significant example of the moral degeneration of the Mughal peerage. The prime minister's grandsons, Mirza Tafakhkhur used to sally forth from his mansion in Delhi with

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1. According to the same writer, "To the thoughtful student of Mughal history, nothing is more striking than the decline of the peerage. The heroes adorn the stage for one generation only and leave no worthy heirs sprung from their loins. Abdur Rahim and Mahabat, Saadullah and Mir Jumla, Ibrahim and Islam Khan Rumi, who had made the history of India in the seventeenth century were succeeded by no son, certainly by no grandson, even half as capable as themselves." When the emperor "was a sluggard or a fool, he ceased to be the master and guide of the nobility. They then naturally turned to win the controlling authority at court or in the provinces."

his ruffians, plunder the shops in the bazar, kidnap Hindu women passing through the public streets in litters or going to the river, and dishonour them; and yet there was no judge strong enough to punish him, no police to prevent such crimes. Every time such an occurrence was brought to the Emperor's notice by the news letters or official reports, he referred it, to the prime minister and did nothing more."

(7) Another cause of Mughal downfall was the deterioration and demoralisation in the Mughal army. The abundance of riches of India and the use of wine and comforts had very evil effects on the Mughal army. Nothing was done to stop the deterioration. The soldiers cared more for their personal comforts and less for winning battles.<sup>1</sup> The impotence of the Mughal armies was declared to the world when they failed to conquer Balkh and Badakhshan in the time of Shah Jahan. Likewise, the failure of Shah Jahan to recapture Kandhar in spite of three determined efforts proved to the world that the military machine of the Mughals had become impotent. In 1739, Nadir Shah not only plundered the people of Delhi but also ordered their wholesale massacre. When such a thing is done by a foreigner, it only proves that the existing government is helpless. Such a government forfeits the right to exact allegiance from the people. The Mughal state was a police state and it contented itself with two duties only, viz., maintenance of internal order and external peace and collection of revenue. When even this could not be done, the people lost all their respect for such a government.

According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "The demoralisation of the army was one of the principal factors in the disintegration of the empire. It cannot be attributed to the puppets who during the first half of the eighteenth century disgraced the throne of Babur and of Akbar, or even to Aurangzeb. The source of the weakness was the composition of the army which consisted chiefly of contingents maintained by the great nobles from the revenues of assignments held by them for the purpose. The defects of this system had been clearly perceived both by Ala-ud-Din Khilji and by Akbar, as later by Nadir Shah, but neither had succeeded in permanently abolishing it. They were less apparent in the reign of a monarch who could command the affections and the obedience of the nobles, but the system was radically unsound, as every system must be which depends upon such an uncertain factor as the personal character of a monarch, and as the authority of the sovereign relaxed the general tendency among the great nobles was naturally to hold as their own those assignments which maintained their troops. Thus the later emperors had no personal body of troops with which to assert authority.

"Two other grave defects appeared as early as in 1595 at the first siege of Ahmadnagar. The first was the jealousy which

1. According to Irvine, "Excepting want of personal courage, every other fault in the list of military vices may be attributed to the degenerate Moghuls; indiscipline, want of cohesion, luxurious habits, inactivity, and commissariat and cumbrous equipment."

afterwards became so prominent a characteristic of the imperial officers that a commander would sometimes deliberately refrain from bringing to a successful conclusion a battle already more than half won or a siege which had reduced the garrison of a fortress to extremities if he perceived that another would share the credit of his success. The second was the habit of treacherous correspondence with the enemy. The constant internecine wars between the five independent Muhammedan kingdoms of the Deccan had been conducted on a most pernicious system. A campaign was regarded by the commanders on either side as an occasion for the display of diplomatic as well as of military skill, and as an opportunity for enriching themselves. This spirit appears to have infected the imperial army in the Deccan and during Aurangzeb's quarter of a century of warfare in that region only one fortress was taken by storm. Conflicts in the field, as well as the attack and defence of fortified places, were decided by negotiation and money payments as often as by force of arms.

“Finally, the general laxity of discipline converted the army into a mob. Drill was unknown and a soldier's training, which he might undergo or not, as he liked, consisted in muscular exercise and in individual practice in the use of the weapons with which he was armed. He mounted guard or not as he liked, the punishment for absence, not invariably inflicted, consisting in the loss of a day's pay. There was, indeed, no regular punishment for military crimes. An infuriated commander might occasionally expose officers and men guilty of cowardice to the ridicule of their comrades by mounting them on asses and parading them through the camp, but even this grave crime frequently went unpunished, and Aurangzeb himself habitually overlooked as matters of course acts of treason, cowardice and deliberate neglect of duty before the enemy.”<sup>1</sup>

(8) It is pointed out that the Mughals suffered from intellectual bankruptcy. That was partly due to the lack of an efficient system of education in the country which alone could produce leaders of thought. The result was that the Mughals failed to produce any political genius or leader who could “teach the country a new philosophy of life and to kindle aspirations after a new heaven on earth. They all drifted and dozed in admiration of the wisdom of their ancestors and shook their heads at the growing degeneration of the moderns.”

According to Sir J. N. Sarkar, “There was no good education, no practical training, of the sons of the Mughal nobility. They were too much petted by eunuchs and maid-servants and passed through a sheltered life from birth to manhood, every thorn being removed from their path by attendants. Early familiarised with vice, softened in their fibres by pleasure, they were yet taught to have an inordinately high opinion of their own wealth and importance in the scale of creation. Their domestic tutors were an unhappy class,

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 374-75.

powerless to do any good except by love of their pupils, browbeaten by the eunuchs (with the support of the ladies of the harem), disobeyed by the lads themselves, and forced to cultivate the arts of the courtier and the sneak, or to throw up their thankless office. The free give and take in a public school (which hardens character and at the same time removes its angularities), the salutary discipline of training as subalterns in an orderly army, were unknown to the sons of the Mughal aristocracy."

(9) The growth of hostile and rival cliques in the court also undermined the strength of the Government. Hardly anybody seemed to be concerned with the problems facing the country. Everyone was selfish and tried to gain his own end. Efforts were made to put one against the other. Such an atmosphere is not congenial for checking the break-up of an Empire. "Each section tried to poison the ears of the Emperor against the other, thwart its plans, stir up its discontented servants and even engage in active hostility to it when at a distance from the court. Rebels could not be opposed with all the armed strength of the Empire; they could always count upon secret supporters or at least neutral make-believe opponents in the imperial court and camp."

(10) After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire faced financial bankruptcy. The beginning had already been made in the time of Aurangzeb who ruined the finances of the Empire by his Deccan wars. After his death, the system of farming of taxation was resorted to. Although the Government did not get much, the people were ruined. They were taxed to such an extent that they lost all incentive to production. Shah Jahan had himself increased the State demands to one-half of the produce. According to William Forster, "All the writers of the time extol this plunder of his (Shah Jahan's) court, the liberality of his rule, and his personal popularity. At the same time, they did not conceal the fact that the splendid facade hid a crumbling interior. Such extravagant expenditure was a crushing burden upon the resources of the country; while the venality of the officials and the tyrannical caprice of the Mughal Governors, added to the misery of the people who had little or no means for obtaining redress." The financial collapse came in the time of Alamgir who was practically starved by his Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk. It is stated that Alamgir II had no conveyance to take him to the Idgah and he had to walk on foot. It is pointed out by Sir J. N. Sarkar that once upon a time no fire was kindled in the harem kitchen for three days and one day "the princesses could bear starvation no longer and in frantic disregard of purdah rushed out of the palace to the city, but the fort gates being closed, they sat down in the men's quarters, for a day and a night, after which they were persuaded to go back to their rooms." Such a thing happened in 1755 and obviously such a Government could not afford to live long.

(11) It goes without saying that the Mughal rule was alien to the Indian soil. It did not take its roots in the soil of the country.

Hence, it could not be expected to last long. To quote Edwardes and Garret, "To the vast majority of the people of India, the Mughal Empire was essentially a foreign Empire, and on that account could not expect to secure its existence upon a firm foundation of spontaneous popular support. Alien in its nature and administrative organization, it was powerless to evoke such feelings as those which led the people of Maharashtra to follow and fight for Shivaji : it drew no strength from ancient tradition, which has exerted so marked an influence upon Hindu ideals and sentiment. Thus deprived by its own extraneous character of those elements of progress and stability which are included under the broad category of patriotism, its existence as an Oriental despotism depended...upon the character of the ruler and upon the standard of his military power." (*Mughal Rule in India*, p. 351).

The orthodox Muslims felt that they were in India but they did not belong to this country. They were not allowed to take to their hearts the traditions, language and cultural products of the country. They had to import them from Persia and Arabia. Even the civil and criminal laws had to be borrowed from the writings of jurists and decisions of judges in Baghdad and Cairo. The Muslim in India was an intellectual exotic ; he could not adapt himself to his environment. The Quranic precepts for the guidance of civil society and the regulation of human conduct and relations, were framed in a far off age for a nomadic people. "The intellectual paucity caused by this unnatural straining after a foreign and impracticable ideal, not only arrested the mental and social progress of the Indian Muslims, but also made their hearts a fertile soil for noxious weeds.....The racial character of the Semitic peoples who created the Quran and Sunni Canon Law was essentially different from that of the Indians, and the mere fact of a body of the latter race having accepted the religion of the Arabs could not counteract this ethnic difference. These were insurmountable handicaps to Indian Islam."

(12) In the time of Aurangzeb, the size of the Mughal Empire had become unwieldy. It became physically impossible for any one man to govern the same from one centre when the means of communication and transport were not so much developed as they are today. A centralised despotic Government was not suited to the needs of the times.

(13) Another cause was the widespread corruption in the administration. The exaction of official perquisites or gratuities from the public by the officials and their subordinates were universal and admitted practice. Many officials from the highest to the lowest took bribes for doing undeserved favours. Even the Emperor was not above it. Aurangzeb is stated to have asked an aspirant to title : "Your father gave to Shah Jahan one lakh of rupees for adding **Alif** to his title and making him **Amir Khan**. How much will you pay me for the title I am giving you." The ministers and influential courtiers around the Emperor made fortunes. It is stated that Qabil Khan in 2½ years of personal atten-

dance on Aurangzeb amassed 12 lakhs of rupees in cash, besides articles of value and a new house. Money was given for different kinds of favours. "This pressure was passed from the Emperor downwards to the peasant, each social grade trying to squeeze out of the class below itself what it had to pay as present to the rank above it, the cultivator of the soil and the trade being the victims in the last resort."

Moreover, "The clerks, both Hindus and Muhammedans, formed a brotherhood bound together by community of duties and interests, education and ideals, social life and even vices. The official world was inspired by intense hatred and contempt for intruders into its preserve. Offices were expected to be reserved for old families of clerks and accountants. An official who was not a 'hereditary servant' (Khanahzad) of State but had sprung from the rank, was despised as a *novum homo* used to be in the official world of the dying republic of Rome. The attitude was universal, from the higher nobility to the petty clerks." Such a state of affairs was detrimental to the highest interest of the State.

(14) Another cause of Mughal downfall was the neglect of the sea-power by the Mughals. The result was that it could not hold its own against the foreigners who were particularly strong on the seas.

(15) The Mansabdari system degenerated in the time of Aurangzeb and his successors. There was corruption and oppression all around. According to William Norris, in the later years of Aurangzeb's reign, the treasury was empty, the wars were ceaseless, the army was disorganised and officers were discontented and disloyal. According to Bernier, "There were great ministers and generals, but the mass of people were human sheep." Such people could not maintain an Empire.

(16) According to S. R. Sharma, the Mughal administrative system was created "by Emperors and hence rooted in their character. With the deterioration of the pivot, the structure too was shaken to its foundations." No centralised government which is not broadbased on democratic principles and machinery, can last. Benevolence is the only "saviour of autocratic governments. The Mughal monarchy was no exception. It failed miserably when it shed its enlightenment and retained only its autocracy. Finally, it proved too weak even to be autocratic. Feudal anarchy which the great emperors, from Akbar to Aurangzeb, had held in leash, broke loose under their effeminate successors. Pampered princes could not sustain a stable and efficient government. So passed away the Grand Monarchy of India when it did not possess the power to support even its grandeur."

(17) There was no law of succession by which peaceful succession to the throne could be secured. After the death of every Emperor, there was a fratricidal or patricidal struggle. The principle of **Tukht ya Takhta** ("Either the throne or the coffin")

was followed. That was hardly a desirable state of affairs. The very foundations of the Empire were shaken after a few years.

(18) Another cause of the downfall of the Mughals was the stoppage of adventurers from Persia, Afghanistan and Turkestan. While the Mughals in India ruined themselves through luxuries and pleasures, there was a dearth of men who could shoulder the responsibilities of the Government. It is the adventurers particularly from Persia who had given India able administrators and generals and when that source stopped, the Mughal administrative machinery became like a corpse and it was not able to deliver the goods.

(19) Another cause was an inner malaise, a kind of general loss of nerve on the part of the Muslim community in India. The Muslims in India forgot that they had a mission to fulfil in this country. The Muslims who counted in the country cared more for personal aggrandisement than for the glory of Islam in India. The ablest among them were keen to set up kingdoms of their own and thereby perpetuate their names. Theologians like Shah Wali Ullah took refuge in the concept of the community of the faithful looking only to God instead of calling upon the Muslims to rally round the throne. What was to be seen was not patriotism or bravery but cynicism, opportunism and indulgence. Much could not be expected in this sorry state of affairs.

One might conclude by saying that "the Mughal State owed its decline and ultimate downfall to a combination of causes, of which perhaps the two most important were the uncontrolled domination of a selfish and extravagant bureaucracy and an inequitable economic system which steadily impoverished the revenue-producing classes of the population. These two evils, in combination with religious persecution, engendered conditions which prevented the Empire from successfully resisting the attacks of external forces and rendered it an easy prey to internal treachery." (**Mughal Rule in India**, Pp. 368-85).

### Legacy of the Mughals in India

The Mughals ruled India for more than 200 years and consequently they left a lot in the form of their legacy in the country. The Mughals were great builders. They built not only mosques, but also palaces, tombs and gardens. They have left to us the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, the Red Fort at Delhi, Jama Masjid at Delhi and many other buildings. Even today after the lapse of hundreds of years, these buildings remind us of the glory of the Mughals. The Mughals have also left to us the paintings and we can really be proud of them.

The Mughals were great patrons of literature and a large number of books written in the Mughal period have come down to us. Reference may be made to the **Akbarnamah** and **Ain-i-Akbari** of Abul Fazl, **Tuzak-i-Jahangiri** and **Tuzak-i-Babri** have their own charm. Gulbadan Begum's **Humayunamah**, Nizam-ud-Din Ahmed's **Tabqat i-Akbari**, Badauni's **Muntakhab-ut-**



**Tawarikh**, etc., give us a lot of information about the Mughals. Tulsi Das's *Ramayana* is a product of the Mughal period. The Bhakti movement gave us a lot of literature. Books were written in Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi and Hindi. Reference may be made to the works of Ram Das, Ram Prasad, Sur Das, Tuka Ram and Tulsi Das in this connection.

The Mughals left their legacy in the system of administration. Sir J. N. Sarkar<sup>1</sup> points out the Mughal system of administration was borrowed by the Hindu States outside the territory directly subject to Muslim rule. The Mughal system was copied by the vassal Rajas of Jaipur and Bundelkhand. Even a staunch champion of Hindu orthodoxy, like Shivaji, at first copied it in Maharashtra. It was only later in life that he made a deliberate attempt to give a Hindu colour to his administrative machinery by substituting Sanskrit titles for Persian ones at his court. In spite of this, most of the names of the departments, records and subordinate officials in his kingdom remained Islamic. The Mughal system spread over practically all the civilised and organised parts of India. "Now it is altogether dead in our own times. Traces of it still survive, and an observant student of history can detect the Mughal sub-structure under the modern British Indian administrative edifice. When in the late eighteenth century, a band of English merchants and clerks were unexpectedly called upon to govern a strange land and an alien race, they very naturally took over the Mughal system then prevailing among the people, made in it only the most necessary changes, and while retaining its old framework, they very reluctantly and slowly added such new elements as the safety and prosperity of the country demanded from time to time. This was the true character of the Anglo-Indian administration of Bengal and Bihar under Warren Hastings. Under his successors, after many intervals of repose, the administration has again and again departed from its Mughal original. But the new has been built upon the old; our present has its root in our past." The Mughals had divided the country into Subahs, Sarkars and Parganas. A similar division of the country is to be found in the form of provinces or States, divisions and districts.

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1. The same writer observes thus: "The two hundred years of Mughal rule....gave to the whole of northern India and to much of the Deccan also, oneness of official language, administrative system and coinages and also a popular *lingua franca* for all classes except the Hindu priests and the stationary village folk. Even outside the territory directly administered by the Mughal Emperors, their administrative system, official titles, court etiquette, and monetary type were borrowed, more or less, by the neighbouring Hindu Rajas." Again, "All the twenty Indian subahs of the Mughal Empire were governed by exactly the same administrative machinery, with exactly the same procedure and official titles. Persian was the language used in all official records etc...Officials and soldiers were frequently transferred from one province to another. Thus, the native of one province felt himself almost at home in another province; traders and travellers passed most easily from city to city, subah to subah, and all realised the imperial oneness of this vast country."

Our internal trade still follows the old roads and river routes. Agriculture still forms the most extensive industry. It retains all those features which it possessed in the times of the Mughals. Some of the Mughal canals even now irrigate large tracts of agricultural lands. Indigenous banking and instruments still operate in many parts of the country as they did during the Mughal period. Indian rupee of today is identical with the coin introduced during the Mughal period. Till recently, weights and measures of the present time could be traced to the Mughal period. Virjee Voras and Jagat Seths of Mughal period have their counterparts in our time.

Akbar adopted many methods to bring together Hindus and Muslims. The dream of Akbar is still the dream of India. For a time the Rajputs, Shias and even the Sunnis, with a few exceptions, appeared to accept the ideal of Akbar. The Ibadat Khana at Fatehpur Sikri tried to solve a problem which we are trying to solve even today.

It is rightly pointed out that while the Mughal Empire has vanished, it has left many traces behind. In our dress, speech, etiquette, thought, literature, music, painting and architecture, we find the Mughal influence. The Indian art of today is a legacy of the Mughal period. While the earlier Muslims merely destroyed everything that came from a Hindu source, the Mughals assimilated, synthesised and recreated in immortal form. To quote Dr. V. A. Smith, "Perhaps the most fruitful general observation arising from such perusal is that of the predominance of Hindu names. For instance, in the **Waqiat-i-Baburi**...out of twenty-two names, nineteen are Hindu, and only three Muslim. Similarly, in Abul Fazl's catalogue of seventeen artists, only four are Muhammedan, while thirteen are Hindu. As with painting so with architecture and the other arts and literature. It is not so much the number of Hindus that were employed that matters, but the fact that they were generously appreciated and patronised on a large scale and not merely as exceptions. Among the thousands of artists, artisans and master-builders that were engaged throughout the Mughal period in the construction of the numerous buildings, palaces and mosques, there were both Hindus and Muslims who worked in unison in order to produce the exquisite effects which attract to this day admiring tourists from all parts of the world. In some, as in the Jahangiri Mahal, the Hindu type predominated; in others as in the temples of Brindavan, the Muslim restraint in external ornamentation showed itself. But these might be considered as experimental and tentative designs. The perfection was reached where the Hindu and the Muslim both merged their individualities in a sublime form like that of the Taj Mahal, which is neither Hindu nor Muslim but Indian."

The Hindustani dress of today is the same that we find in the Mughal paintings. This applies to both men and women. Our Hindusthani bearing, etiquette and forms of address are a

legacy from the Mughal courtiers and citizens. Our Hindusthani music and musical instruments are the same as those of the Mughal period. The same applies to the Hindusthani paintings, architecture and literature. The **Ramayana** of Tulsi Das has come down to us from the Mughal period. Dr. V. A. Smith writes thus about Tulsi Das, "That Hindu was the greatest man of his age in India—greater even than Akbar himself, inasmuch as the conquest of the hearts and minds of millions of men and women affected by the poet was an achievement infinitely more lasting and important than any or all of the victories gained in the war by the monarch."

Another legacy of the Mughals is the growth of the Urdu language. This was the outcome of the contact between the Muslims and the Hindus. Although it was not patronised by the Muslim Emperors who used Persian as the court language, it made a lot of progress during the Mughal period.

The Hindus had been isolated from the world for centuries. The Mughals brought them into contact with the outside world. The result was that their outlook was widened and a spirit of progress entered their minds. The Mughal imperialism was responsible for the conquest of the whole to the country that created a feeling of oneness among the people.

One may conclude with the following words of Lane-Poole : "A new vernacular, compounded of the languages of the Shah-namah and the Ramayana, a multitude of exquisite monuments of the Muslim faith inspired by analogies in far Western lands of Islam, but modified and if one may say so, sensualized by the grosser architecture of India : a few provinces still owning Mohammedan rulers; a large Muslim minority content to dwell among infidels and to obey the behests of the Christians from distant islands of the West, such are the chief legacies of Islam to India."

### **Persian Influence on India**

It is true that Persian was known in India long before coming of the Mughals but it was used in Sultanate period only for purposes of business and literature. Delhi was a Persian literacy centre. As the number of persons who knew Persian was a limited one, there could not be much impact on the masses. However, by the time the Mughals came, things had changed tremendously. The Hindus were in a mood to learn the Persian language. The prestige of Persia also rose at this time and this helped the cause of Persian in India.

During the Mughal period, Persian was the language of administration. Every one who wanted service under the Government had to learn it. It is for this reason that a large number of Hindus learnt the Persian language. The Hindu nobility also took to Persian. Persian also became the diplomatic language

throughout India. This was so not only in the case of Muslim rulers but the Hindus also did likewise.

The Persian influence can also be seen in the field of arts. The Humayun tomb and the Taj Mahal both show Persian influence. Persian ideas are also to be seen in the Mughal paintings. The Persian love of water and flowers can be seen in gardens of the Mughals. Persian styles and conventions can be seen in Hindu places and garden houses. Mughal dress was also influenced by Persian dress. Even manners in India were copied from Persia. The people gave up their own customs and manners and copied those from Persia. The ideas of the Sufis affected the people of India. Persian tastes, ideas and attitudes were so thoroughly borrowed from Persia that it became difficult to say whether what was done in India was indigenous or borrowed from Persia. The influence of Persian is to be seen in the Urdu of today. Persian nomenclature and administrative concepts became a part and parcel of Indian life and even the Marathas who were otherwise the enemies of the Mughals, did not hesitate to borrow them.

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## CHAPTER XV

# History and Historians of Mughal India

We are lucky in having a large number of original works from which we can write the history of Mughal rule in India. The students of this period are indebted to Sir Henry Elliot (1808-53) for having collected and preserved Persian histories of this period and making them available to scholars in extracts in translation. He expressed his opinion on the value of the histories collected by him in these words: "If the artificial definition of Dionysius be correct that history is philosophy teaching by examples, then there is no native Indian historian; and few have even approached to so high standard. Of examples, and very bad ones, we have ample store though even in them the radical truth is obscured by the hereditary, official and sectarian prepossessions of the narrator: but of philosophy which deduces conclusions calculated to benefit us from the lesson and experiences of the past, which adverts on the springs and consequences of political transactions, and offers sage counsels for the future, we search in vain for any sign or symptom. Of domestic history also we have in our annalists absolutely nothing and the same may be remarked of nearly all Mohammedan historians, except Ibn Khaldun. By them society is never contemplated either in its conventional usages or recognised privileges; its constituent elements or mutual relations; its established classes or popular institution; in its private recesses or habitual intercourses. In notices of commerce, agriculture, internal police and local judicature they are equally deficient. A fact, an anecdote, a speech, a remark which would illustrate the conditions of the common people, or of any rank subordinate to the highest, is considered too insignificant to be suffered to intrude upon a relation which concerns only grandees and ministers, 'thrones and imperial powers'. Hence it is that these works may be said to be deficient in some of the most essential requisites of history, for 'its great object', says Dr. Arnold, 'is that which most nearly touches the inner life of civilised man, namely, the vicissitudes of institutions, social, political, religious'. In Indian histories there is little that enables us to penetrate below the glittering surface and observe the practical operation of a despotic government and rigorous and sanguinary laws, and the effect upon the great body of the nation of these injurious influences and agencies.....

From them, nevertheless, we can gather that the common people must have been plunged into the lowest depths of wretchedness and despondency."

It is pointed out that the view of Sir Henry Elliott was not that of a scholar but that of an administrator and an apologist for British rule in India. The view of Major Nassau Lees is more appropriate. According to him, "Many able men have occupied themselves with the history of India, and each and all of them have contributed in their degree to dispel the mists of ignorance which cloud the knowledge of even the best informed persons in England on this subject. The Hon. Mountstuart Elphinston has written perhaps the most generally approved history of India. Still how very incomplete it is, and how very incomplete is every history of India that has yet appeared ! Yet the materials for a history of the Mohammedan period, if incomplete for the whole, exist in abundance for a great if not the greater part ; and it does not reflect credit on the English name or nation that, having been the paramount power in India now for upwards of a century, and having been for upwards of half that period in complete possession of the greater portion of it, no efficient effort has been made to collect and consolidate these materials in such a manner as to make them available for the service of the future historian and for the instruction of the patient student, or of those who come to India to rule, to trade, to travel, or for any other purpose of business or pleasure. True it is, as just stated, that the materials for the compilation of a history of India for the six hundred years of Mohammedan dynasties are not so complete for all portions of the period as could be wished ; indeed, for some they are scant. True it is that the great mass of Mohammedan and historical works partake more or less of the character of biographies, and are rather chronicles of the deeds of kings than of the events of the period, the institutions of the people, the progress of civilization, and the results of policy and contemporaneous opinions regarding them, and are deficient in many of those characteristics which enable posterity to derive valuable lessons from the experience of the past. More true still is it that most of the historians were for the most part court chroniclers who wrote to order, and whose business it was to employ their eloquent language to draw a veil over the vices of those whose virtues they were hired to extol. Still, I do not coincide in opinion with those who estimate as of little worth the large body of historical works which has been bequeathed to posterity by the many very able writers who flourished at intervals within the period above-mentioned. Where are the historians from the ages of the Greeks and Romans down to our own time, to whose writings many and grave objections may not be taken ? You might almost count them on fingers. In reading oriental histories, moreover, all due allowance must be made for the influences of despotism, bigotry, love of flattery, and personal vanity, which is peculiarly characteristic of the man and the times of which they wrote ; but though exaggeration may sometimes have been resorted to, a main peculiarity of Mohammedan writers and which is of the essence of all sound history is regard for truth. Nor are we altogether dependent

upon court chroniclers ; we have in some instances contemporary and independent historians ; besides which, writers who have never failed to comment freely upon the histories of those authors who have preceded them, and their testimony in such cases may be considered impartial. Where, again, is the Emperor in modern times who would so truthfully and so frankly record his own follies and vices as the Emperor Jehangir had done in the memoirs or autobiography, commonly called the **Tuzak-i-Jahangiri** ? Where is nowadays the empire in which an author could dare to write of his despot rulers in the unmeasured terms in which Abdul Kadir of Badaon has written of the Emperor Akbar ? Where in the whole range of the literature of that period of the world history can we find a more valuable and complete compendium of the political, religious, social, commercial, and agricultural institutions of a nation than is contained in the Institutes of Akbar compiled by Abul Fazl ? That much valuable information is to be acquired, and that many useful deductions may be drawn from the facts and events found recorded in the pages of the Mohammedan historians of India there can be little doubt."

### **Babur-namah**

Tuzak-i-Buburi, Waqiat-i-Baburi or Babur-namah rank very high in the historical literature of the Mughal period. It is considered to be a first rate authority on the history of the Mughal period. It is regarded as one of "the most thrilling and romantic works in the history of all times." Its Persian translation was completed in 1589-90 by Abdul-Rehman Khanikhanan, son of Bairam Khan. Another translation was prepared by Sheikh Zain. There is an Urdu translation of the Memoirs by Mirza Nasir-ud-Din Haider published in Delhi in 1924. The Memoirs do not contain a complete record of the life of Babur. There are many gaps in it. It gives an account of only 18 years of Babur's life. The rest is omitted. It is stated that Babur sent a copy of his Memoirs to a friend in Kabul. It was held in high esteem at the Court of Delhi. It is stated that Humayun transcribed it in his own hand and Akbar ordered a Persian translation of it so that it could be read widely.<sup>1</sup>

### **Tazkirat-ul-Waqait**

Tazkirat-ul-Waqait was written by Jauhar who was a servant of Humayun. The great merit of this book lies in the fact that he wrote everything from his personal knowledge. He put down in simple language what he actually saw in life. We get from this book interesting details about the life of Humayun. It is Jauhar who has written about the life of Humayun in Persia. Without him, we would have not known anything about it. Jauhar was not an historian in the modern sense. His work lacks dates. His topographical knowledge is very deficient. He suffers from lapses of memory at places. On the whole, his eyewitness account is useful in many ways.

1. For further information about the Memoirs, kindly refer to the chapter on Babur.

## Humayun-namah

Humayun-namah was written by Gulbadan Begum<sup>1</sup>. She was a daughter of Babur. She was born in about 1523 and she died in 1603. She was held in high esteem. It is stated that Akbar carried her bier a little distance and distributed money for the benefit of her soul.

Gulbadan tells us that she received a command from Akbar to write whatever she knew and remembered about Babur and Humayun. Consequently, she wrote what she knew herself and also supplemented the same by getting information from others. As she was very young at the time of the death of Babur, her account of Babur is very brief. Most of her work is concerned with the life of Humayun. She tells us about his victories, defeats and hardships. She describes the dreary warfare between Humayun and Kamran. However, she has omitted very important matters about her times. She does not tell us much about the Battles of Chausa and Kanauj. In spite of it, we get a lot of information about the social customs of her times. We get an interesting picture of the lives of the people of her times.<sup>2</sup>

## Tarikh-i-Rashidi

The Tarikh-i-Rashidi is a valuable history of the Mughals and Turks of Central Asia. Its author was Mirza Haider, a cousin of Babur. Mirza Haider was a man of talent and good disposition. He died in 1551.

The Tarikh-i-Rashidi gives us an insight into the politics of Central Asia. Mirza Haider has written also about Babur and Humayun. He praises Babur for his generosity. He has given interesting details about the times of Humayun. He has given us an eye-witness account of the Battle of Kanauj. No other writer has given us such a detailed account of that battle as Mirza Haider has done. He tells us a lot about the character and habits of Humayun. His account is valuable because he was very near to Humayun.

## Akbar-namah

Abul Fazl was the author of Akbar-namah. He was born in 1551. He was presented to Akbar in 1575 and he rose to a position of eminence. He distinguished himself as a writer, statesman, diplomat and a military commander. He was assassinated in 1602.

Abul Fazl made thorough preparations for writing Akbar-namah. To quote him, "Assuredly, I spent much labour and

1. It has been translated into English by Mrs. A.S. Beveridge.

2. Humayun-namah "has few, if any, compeers, in as much as it is the work of a Mussalmani and lights up her weman's world,"

research in collecting the records and narrative of His Majesty's actions and I was a long time interrogating the servants of the State and the old members of the illustrious family. I examined both prudent, truth-speaking old men and active-minded, right-actioned young ones and reduced their statements to writing. The royal commands were issued to the provinces, that those who from old service remembered with certainty or with admixture of doubt, the events of the past, should copy out their notes and memoranda and transmit them to court. Inasmuch as this suspicious invitation was not fully responded to nor my wish fully accomplished, a second command shone forth from the holy Presence-chamber; to wit—that the materials which had been collected should be fared out and recited in the royal hearing and that whatever might have to be written down afterwards should be introduced into the noble volume as a supplement, and that such details as, on account of the minuteness of the enquiries and the minutiae of affairs, could not then be brought to an end, should be inserted afterwards at my leisure. Being relieved by this royal order—interpreter of the Divine ordinance—from the secret anxiety of my heart, I proceeded to reduce into writing the rough drafts which were void of the graces of arrangement and style. I obtained the chronicle of events beginning with the nineteenth year of the Divine Era, when the Record Office was established by the enlightened intellect of his majesty, and from its rich pages I gathered the account of many events. Great pains too were taken to procure originals or copies of most of the orders which had been issued to the provinces from the accession up to the present day which is the dawn of Fortune's morning. Their sacred contents yielded much materials for the sublime volume. I also took much trouble to incorporate many of the reports which ministers and high officials had submitted, about the affairs of the empire and the events of foreign countries. And my labour-loving soul was satisfied by the apparatus of inquiry and research. I also exerted myself energetically to collect the rough notes and memoranda of sagacious well-informed men. By these means, I constructed a reservoir for irrigating and moistening the rose garden of fortune. But inasmuch as, notwithstanding all this apparatus and these rich treasures of information, the House of History has become decayed from lapse of time and there were contradictions and imperfections in the accounts and no sufficient means of clearing up difficulties—I begged the correction of what I had heard from his Majesty who, by virtue of his perfect memory, recollects every occurrence in gross and in detail, from the time he was one year old—when the material reason came into action—till the present day when he is by his wisdom the cynosure of penetrating truth-seekers. By repeated interviews, I arrived at correctness and erased doubts and difficulties with the knife of investigation and ascertainment. When peace had possessed my soul, I made honesty and lavish labour conductors of the lofty undertaking."

Abul Fazl originally intended to write four volumes on the reign of Akbar. The fifth volume was to be devoted to administrative

institutions established by Akbar. The original draft was revised five times before it was submitted to Akbar in 1596. **Ain-i-Akbari** was compiled earlier and submitted in 1593.

**Akbar-namah** is a detailed history of the reign of Akbar. The first part deals with the birth of Akbar and the reigns of Babur and Humayun. The second part deals with the reign of Akbar from the first to the end of the 46th year. The third part is the **Ain-i-Akbari** which, according to Jarret, "will deservedly go down to posterity as a unique compilation of the system of administration and control throughout the various departments of government in a great empire faithfully and minutely recorded in their smallest detail, with such an array of facts illustrative of its extent, resources, conditions, population, industry and wealth as the abundant materials supplied from official sources could furnish."

The **Akbar-namah** is the most complete and authentic history of the reign of Akbar. The literary attainments of Abul Fazl, his acute and analytical mind, the position he had in the Court and the confidence he enjoyed of his master, his great industry and honesty of purpose eminently fitted him to become the historiographer royal of the Mughals. Abul Fazl was a master of style. According to the author of *Maasir-ul-Umara*, "As a writer, Abul Fazl stands unrivalled. His style is grand and is free from technicalities and flimsy pettiness of other Munshis; and the force of his words, the structure of his sentences, the suitableness of his compounds and elegance of his periods are such that it would be difficult for any one to imitate him." According to Elliott, "Though he was a man of enlarged views and extraordinary talents, yet as Elphinston remarks, he was a professed rhetorician and is still the model of the unnatural style which is so much admired in India. He was, besides, a most assiduous courtier eager to extol the virtues, to gloss over the crimes and to preserve the dignity of his master and those in whom he was interested.....His narrative is florid, fickle and indistinct, overloaded with commonplace reflections, and pious effusions, generally ending in a compliment to his patron."

The *Muntakhib-ut-Twarikh* was written by Mulla Abdul Qadir of Badaun. The author was born in 1540. In 1574, he was presented to Akbar who appointed him as Imam and gave him 1,000 bighas of land as *Madad-i-Maash*. Akbar was impressed by his learning and his ability to break the pride of learning of the Mullahs. However, he was thrown into the background by Abul Fazl. The result was that Abdul Qadir became the enemy of Akbar and no wonder he condemned Akbar, Abul Fazl and Faizi in the strongest possible language. He not only disliked the free thought and eclecticism of Akbar but was also disgusted with Akbar's patronage of men of different religions. He completed his work shortly before his death and according to Khafi Khan, its publication was suppressed by Jahangir.

The *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* was written by Nizamuddin Bakshi in 1592-3. It is a general history beginning with the Ghaznavids and comes up to the end of 36th year of the reign of Akbar. This work

has been held in high repute for its sobriety and authentic account of the events of the period which it covers. It became the basis of the future works. The author held important offices under Akbar and was held in high esteem.

Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri was written by Emperor Jahangir. We have three versions of these Memoirs. The version which is accepted as authentic was written by the Emperor himself. It covers the period from his accession to the end of the 12th year of his reign. The Memoirs were continued up to the 17th year. On account of bad health, Jahangir appointed Mutamad Khan to continue the work under his supervision and that was done up to the 19th year. They were finally re-edited in the time of Muhammad Shah by Muhammad Hadi who brought them up to the end of the reign of Jahangir.

The Memoirs are a priceless record of the reign of Jahangir and are distinguished by their frankness and lucidity. Besides the account of military and political transactions, the Memoirs are rich in details about the social, cultural and spiritual life of this period and the keen observations of Jahangir about men and manners.

Iqbalnamah-i-Jahangiri was written by Mutamad Khan who held important offices under Emperor Jahangir. This work gives an account of the history of Babar, Humayun, Akbar and Jahangir. For the first 17 years of the reign of Jahangir, the author mainly depended upon the Memoirs of Jahangir.

Another important work of this period was Maathir-i-Jahangiri which was completed in 1630. This work was written on the asking of Emperor Shah Jahan. The author was able to lay his hands on the original sources and he made good use of the same.

Abdul Hamid Lahori wrote Padshah Namah in the reign of Shah Jahan. The author was asked by the Emperor himself to write a history of his reign and he chose Abdul Fazl as his model. The author has given full details about the events and one gets from this work a clear picture of the political, social and cultural life of the people during the reign of Shah Jahan. The work was continued by Muhammad Waris who was his pupil. The latter added at the end of the work a list of the Shaikhs, scholars and poets who flourished during that period.

Maasir-i-Alamgiri of Muhammad Saqi Mustaid Khan is a history of the reign of Aurangzeb. The first ten years of this book are an abridgement of Alamgir-nama of Muhammad Kazim. The continuation up to 1707 is an original composition. The author was a constant follower of the court for 40 years and an eye-witness of many of the transactions he records. He undertook the work at the suggestion of his patron and finished it in 1710, three years after the death of Aurangzeb. Khafi Khan in his Muntakhab-ul-lubab informs us that after the expiration of ten years of the reign of Aurangzeb, the authors were forbidden from writing the events of the reign of

Aurangzeb. In spite of that, some competent persons, particularly Mastaid Khan, secretly wrote an abridged account of the campaign in the Deccan, simply detailing the conquests of the countries and forts, without alluding at all to the misfortunes of the campaign.

It is to be observed that Mustaid Khan had a style of his own which is not difficult and yet has some pretension to elegance. The early part of the work is little better than a Court circular or London Gazette, being occupied almost exclusively with the private matters of the royal family, promotions, appointments and removal of the governors. Further on, he enters more fully into matters of historical record and gives details of Aurangzeb's campaigns in the Deccan and his many sieges of forts.

Alamgir-nama was written by Mirza Muhammad Khan, son of Muhammad Amin Munshi, the author of Padshah-nama, in 1688. It contains a history of the ten years of the reign of Aurangzeb. It was dedicated to Aurangzeb in the 32nd year of his reign. On its being presented, the Emperor forbade its continuation. The prohibition seems to be strange because earlier the author had received encouragement from the Emperor for writing it. The style of the work is strained, verbose and tedious. It is fulsome in its flattery and abusive in its censure. Laudatory epithets are heaped one upon another in praise of Aurangzeb while his unfortunate brothers are not only sneered at and abused but their very names are perverted. Dara Shikoh is repeatedly called Be-Shukoh (the undignified) and Shuja is called Na-Shuja (the unvaliant). The work seems to have obtained no concrete reputation in India.

Tarikh-i-Mufazzali of Mufazzal Khan is a general history of considerable length. It begins with the history of Creation and comes down to 1666 A.D., the tenth year of the reign of Aurangzeb. The work is divided into seven sections and sixth and seventh sections are devoted to India. In the account of Nasir-ud-Din Qubacha, it gives a summary of the Chach-nama, which was translated into Persian under his patronage. It is an extensive work of nearly a thousand pages.

The Mirat-i-Alam or the Mirat-i-Jahan-Nama of Bakhtawar Khan is a monument of his industry and ability. Though there is little of novelty, except the account of the first ten years of the reign of Aurangzeb, yet the compilation must be considered useful and comprehensive. The accounts of the poets and saints are very copious and among the best to which reference can be made. It is doubtful how far these portions can be attributed to his pen. They certainly do not form any part of the Mirat-i-Alam. According to Dr. Bernhard Dorn, the Mirat-i-Alam is the most valuable history written in Persian. By travel and assiduous study, its author had qualified himself for the task of a historian.

Zinat-ut-Tawarikh or ornament of Histories by Aziz Ullah is a mere compilation of no value. The author informs us in his preface that he intended composing a second volume in order to reconcile the discrepancies which were observable in different histories.

Whether he ever did so, does not appear, but there is so little critical judgment exercised in the first volume that the second is not worth the search. We learn from the preface that the work was commenced in 1675-76 A.D., but passages occur at the close which show that the work was brought down to 1715-16 A.D. The original work concluded with the account of the children of Aurangzeb. The last few pages, including the mention of Bahadur Shah and Jahandar Shah, must have been added by some transcriber.

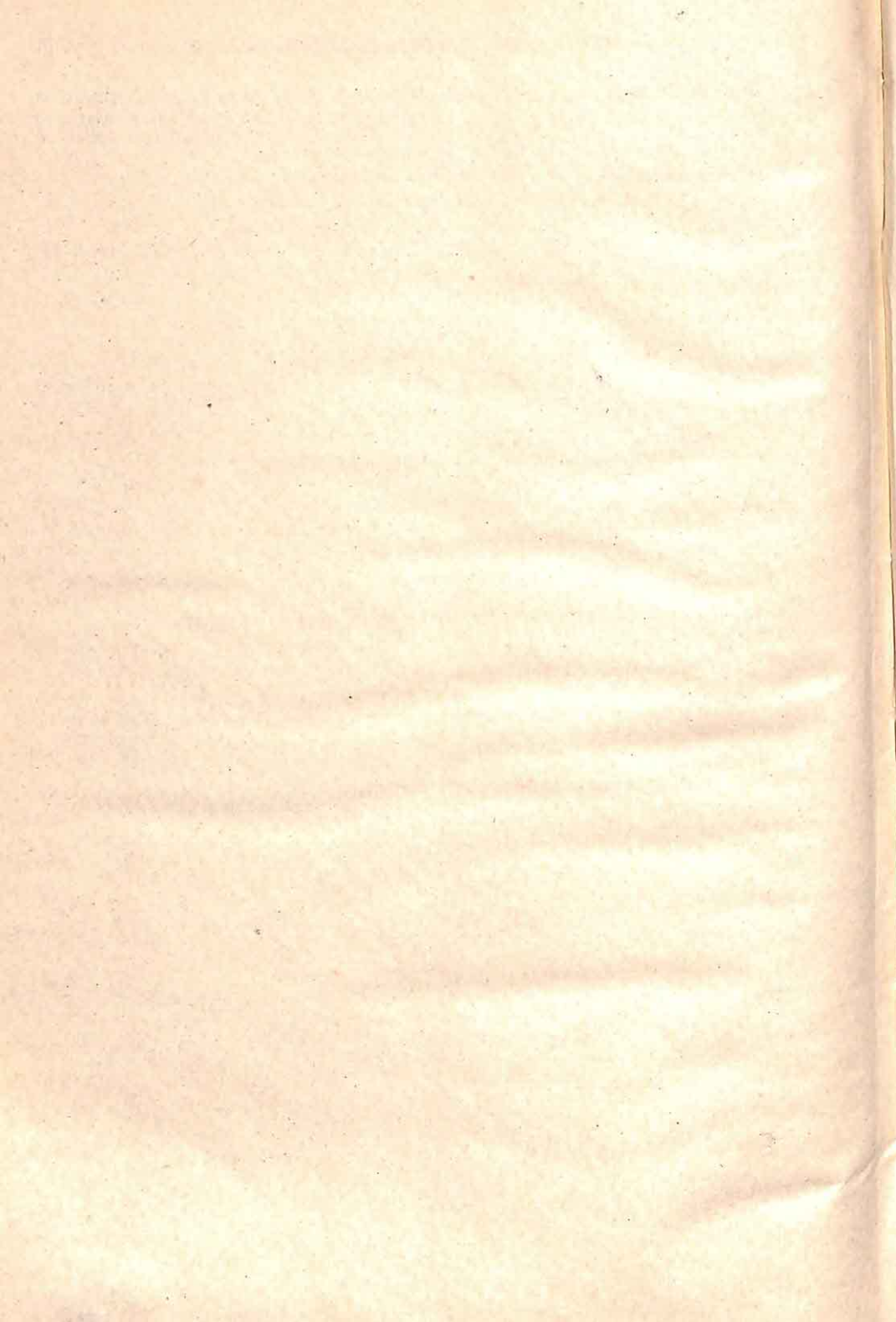
The author of *Fatuh-i-Alamgiri* (The Victories of Aurangzeb) also known as *Wakiat-i-Alamgiri* was written by Muhammad Masum. The author was employed in the service of Sultan Shuja, brother of Aurangzeb. The table of contents gives 55 chapters. The first chapter relates to Shah Jahan's conquest of Balkh and Badakhshan. Chapter 52 "relates the murder of Dara Shikoh by the orders of Aurangzeb in the garden of Khizrabad, by the hands of Shah Nazar Chela, and of the burial of his remains, in the mausoleum of Humayun which is the burial place of all the murdered princes of this house." Chapter 55 gives the remaining account of Shah Shuja and Muazzam.

The *Rukaat-i-Alamgiri* of Aurangzeb gives an idea of the private life and sentiments of this prince. There are three collections of his letters. The *Kalimat-i-Taiyibat* was published by Inayatullah, one of the Chief-Secretaries of the Emperor. The *Rakaimi-i-Karaim* was published by the son of another Secretary. The *Dastur-ul-Aml Agahi* was collected from all quarters 38 years after his death. The first two collections profess to be merely rough drafts or notes which Aurangzeb wrote with his own hand for his Secretary. Most of the three collections have the same appearance. They are without dates or order.

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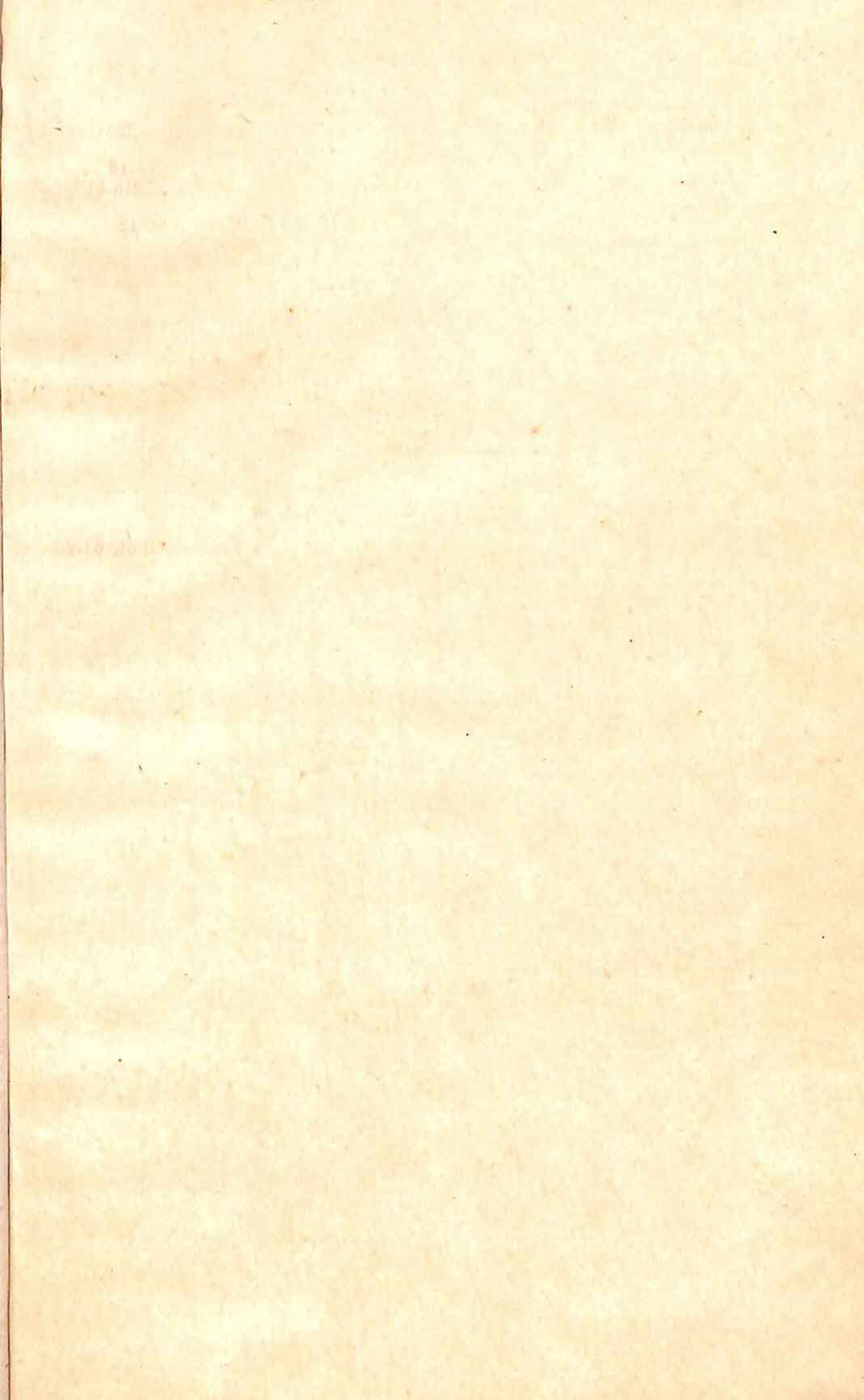
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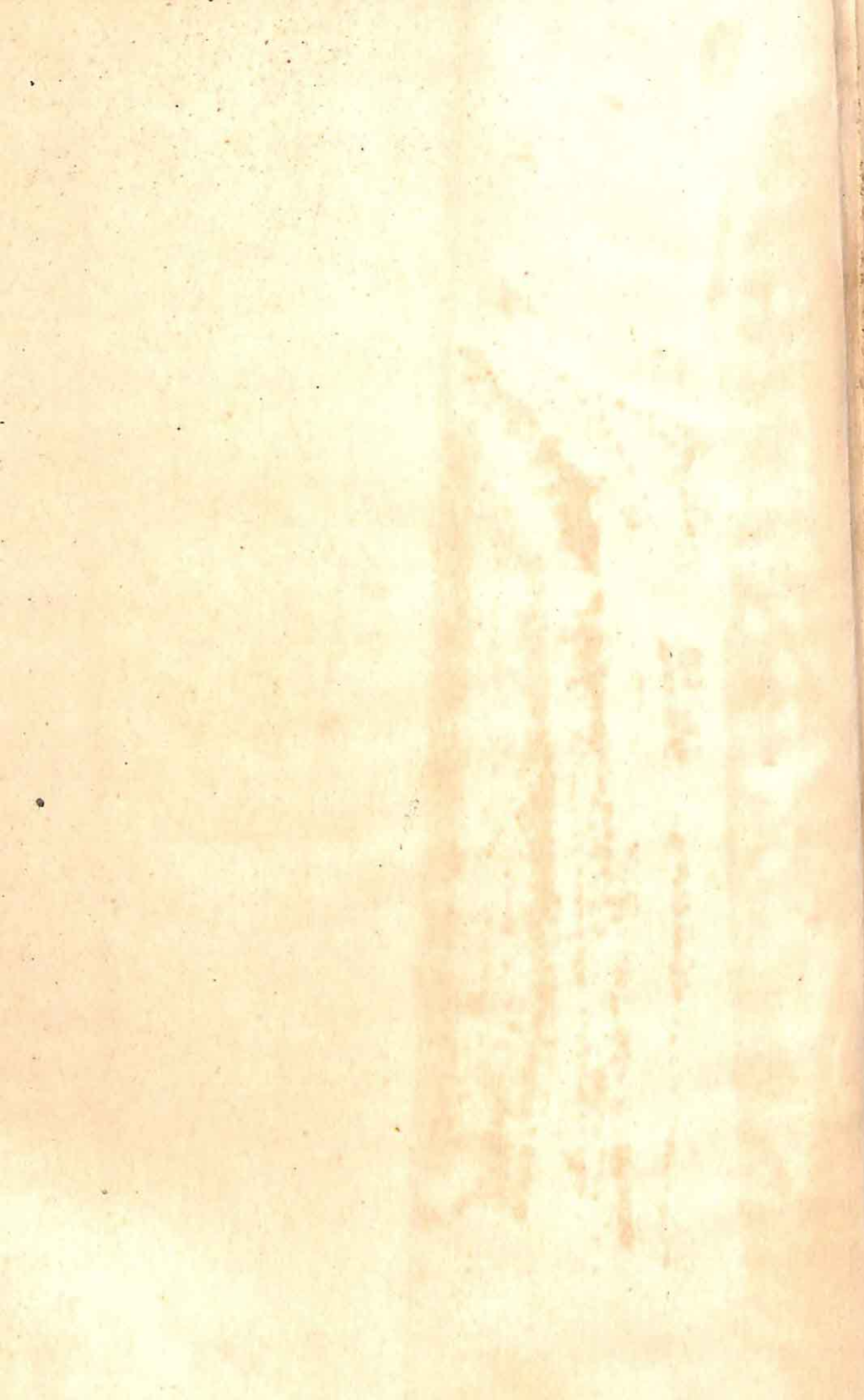
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